

Arabs seen on verge of water crisis

ABU DHABI — (AFP) — Arab states could face a water crisis in the next few years as demand continues to grow and reserves decline, Egypt's public works and water resources minister was quoted on Friday as saying.

"Arab countries are heading for a real problem in the coming few years to ensure new sources of water to face growing demand for irrigation, drinking and industry," Isam Radi told the United Arab Emirates daily Al Bayan. "This problem has started to loom recently and it is worsening every day. Arab countries should pool their efforts to find a solution."

Mr. Radi, in Syria for talks on water cooperation, proposed an Arab conference to discuss the problem "so it will not go out of control." He said tackling water problems among littoral states in the region was needed to avert a war in future. "Water resources should be distributed fairly without harming any country. This is a basic factor in reducing tension among littoral states," he said. "Finding objective grounds based on international treaties and mutual interests among those states will help prevent an outbreak of conflicts."



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Qatari minister arrives in Yemen

DUBAI (R) — Qatar's foreign minister arrived in Sanaa Friday for a visit which Yemen hopes will help improve its relations with Gulf Arab neighbours, strained by Yemeni sympathy for Iraq during the Gulf crisis. The Qatari News Agency said Sheikh Hamad Ben Jabr Al Thani was met by his Yemeni counterpart Mohammad Salem Basandwa, who said Thursday Sheikh Hamad's visit "will be a turning point" in relations between the two countries.

U.S. holds Palestinian over 1985 hijacking

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. authorities said Friday they had arrested a Palestinian in Nigeria for the 1985 hijacking of an Egyptian airliner which resulted in the deaths of two hijackers and 60 passengers. The accused hijacker, Omar Mohammad Ali Rezaq, was flown to Washington Thursday night and was due to appear in court Friday on criminal charges of aircraft piracy and aiding and abetting the crime, the Federal Bureau of Investigation said.

57% of Israelis oppose talks with PLO

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Some 57 per cent of Israeli Jews are against "direct and official" peace negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), according to an opinion poll published Friday. The survey for the Yehudi Aharonot newspaper found 42 per cent in favour of negotiations with the PLO, which is considered a "terrorist" group under Israeli law. One per cent expressed no view. The telephone survey of more than 500 people came after press reports that Israeli and the PLO were conducting secret talks to try to break a deadlock in the Middle East peace process. Over the last two years, pollsters who asked Israelis if they supported dialogue with the PLO found about 33 per cent in favour (see related story on page 2).

U.N. suspends Angola flights

JOHANNESBURG (R) — The United Nations has again suspended Angolan air flights after jets fired on a U.N.-chartered aircraft carrying supplies in the northwest of the country. "There will be no more flights until we get guarantees (of safe passage) from UNITA," a World Food Programme (WFP) official in Johannesburg told Reuters on Friday. The WFP said about 40 bullets hit the Antonov-32 as it tried to land at M'banza Congo, a town in Angola's Zaire province which is in UNITA hands. The aircraft limped back to base with one of its engines on fire. No injuries were reported as a result of Thursday's attack.

Congo declares state of emergency

BRAZZAVILLE (R) — Congo's President Pascal Lissouba declared a two-week state of emergency throughout the country Friday after more than a month of clashes in which at least 23 people have died. Announcing the decision, Prime Minister Joachim Yhombi-Opango said the council of ministers had also elected the head of the armed forces, General Jean-Marie Michel Mokoko.

France seeks release of kidnapped girl

PARIS (AFP) — France Friday called on Israel to release a 16-year-old Lebanese girl kidnapped by Israeli agents in South Lebanon, saying such acts were an attack on Lebanon's sovereignty. "We ask Israel to release the girl and to abstain from these kinds of acts, which we condemn, and which undermine Lebanon's sovereignty," foreign ministry spokesman Richard Duque said. According to Lebanese police, the girl was abducted at a roadblock manned by the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army and Israeli intelligence agents outside the town of Amnun, which lies beyond the Israeli-controlled "security" strip. They said it was the third such kidnapping in two months.

Christopher to visit Mideast Aug. 1-5

Combined agency despatches

WASHINGTON — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher announced Friday he would make the first in a series of trips to the Middle East to energise lagging peace talks, but he played down expectations.

Giving no indication he had a new formula to present to Arab and Israeli leaders, Mr. Christopher said he would go to the region after attending the July 26-28 meeting of the Association of South-East Asian nations (ASEAN) in Singapore.

His aides had indicated he would go to the Middle East early next week and from there to Asia. But Mr. Christopher said he was faced with a heavy Washington schedule, so "the timing worked out better" to go first to ASEAN.

He said he would leave for Singapore next Thursday and stop in Australia after the ASEAN meeting, before continuing to the Middle East.

The secretary will be in the Middle East Aug. 1-5 and make stops in Israel, Jordan, Syria and Egypt. State Department spokesman Michael McCurry said.

Talking to reporters while greeting Belgian Foreign Minister Willy Claes, Mr. Christopher said his trip to the Middle East "will be part of an overall effort to provide what we call a full partnership as well as an honest broker" in the search for a settlement.

There was no hint of urgency in the Christopher mission. It follows one to the region by a U.S. delegation headed by Dennis Ross of the State Department and Martin Indyk of the National Security Council.

"I don't expect this trip will achieve any major breakthroughs," Mr. Christopher said. Israel has been negotiating for 20 months on two tracks — with the Palestinians over self-rule on the West Bank in Gaza, and with Syria, Jordan and Lebanon on peace agreements.

There was no apparent progress in the last round of talks at the State Department which concluded July 1.

"We'll be pursuing the matters we pursued before," including U.S. proposals for narrowing differences between Israel and Palestinians," Mr. Christopher said.

"It's part of a long major effort that the United States has made in pursuit of peace in that area," Mr. Christopher said of his trip, which is expected to be the first in a series through the rest of the year.

On Thursday, Mr. McCurry said Mr. Christopher would lead the Middle East parties to make "hard choices" in their positions.

With peace talks on the brink of collapse, the Clinton administration has devised a strategy of more direct U.S. intervention in the talks, an approach urged by Palestinians and supported by the Israeli government.

Mr. Christopher would try to set up another round of negotiations for early August to be followed by periodic trips to the area by him and also by the Ross-Indyk team.

"We said we look at the end of this year as being critical, and that means Dec. 31," Mr. McCurry said.

Asked about an informal paper the United States shared with Israeli and Palestinian negoti-



ators prior to the end of the last round, the spokesman said it had provided "an important focus" of discussion for the parties.

"We suggested at the time that we presented that paper that this was a way for us to help them identify the differences that exist in their positions, and if they could focus on that document as way of helping them bridge the gaps, that it would be a useful document," he explained. "It's not something you would negotiate language around. I think it's more a discussion guide for the parties themselves."

Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa discussed the stalled Middle East peace process with Lebanese officials Friday.

Upon his arrival at Beirut airport around 2:30 p.m. (1130 GMT), reports arrived in the

capital that Israel had moved more armour into South Lebanon.

Israel said it would retaliate for July 8-9 attacks by Syrian-backed and pro-Iranian groups in which five Israeli troops were killed and eight wounded.

Security sources said about 200 infantrymen in 14 artillery pieces, two armoured personnel carriers and two halftracks rolled across the border into Markaba in the eastern sector of Israel's self-style "security zone" in South Lebanon.

Israel has been building up its strength, which now totals 45 artillery pieces, 12 Merkav tanks, 46 armoured personnel carriers, 34 truckloads of ammunition, 1,200 Israeli troops and 2,500 allied militiamen.

The buildup kindled fears

Israel might be planning to go outside the "security zone" to hunt down guerrillas in South Lebanon.

Israel held Syria responsible for the attacks and threatened retaliation beyond the rules of the game if the Damascus government of President Hafez Al Assad failed to rein in the guerrillas.

Speaking to reporters on arrival at Beirut airport, Mr. Sharaa indicated that Damascus rejected an Israeli warning to curb guerrillas attacking Israeli forces in South Lebanon.

A U.S. team led by Mr. Ross carried the warning from Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to Damascus on Sunday and a Syrian reply back to Israel.

(Continued on page 10)

Jordan-Palestine union may help talks — Erakat

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — A Palestinian peace negotiator said Friday the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was discussing forming a confederation with Jordan in the hope of breaking a deadlock in Arab-Israeli talks.

Saeed Erekat, deputy head of the Palestinian negotiating team, said 20 months of talks with Israel on an interim period of self-rule produced few results, making it necessary to shift discussions to the final status of the occupied territories.

"The first thing that comes to mind if we want to move to final status is the Jordanian-Palestinian relations," he said.

Jordao and the PLO announced in Amman Monday the formation of joint committees in the first practical step towards a future confederation between the Kingdom and Palestinians.

Israelis and Palestinians both raised the idea of discussing confederation now in talks this week with the U.S. envoy Dennis Ross.

Six committees announced in Amman were expected to begin discussing aspects of future relations, including political, economic and legal ties.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Haidar Abdul Shafi has said that in discussing confederation, Jordan and the PLO were expecting to soften Israel's position in the negotiations.

Israel objects to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and favours

instead a confederation with Jordan.

Under the terms of U.S.-brokered talks launched in Madrid in October 1991, Palestinians and Israelis were to negotiate an agreement on a five-year-period of self-rule for the nearly two million Palestinians in the occupied territories.

The two sides were to begin negotiations on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, only three years into self-rule. The talks have made no progress.

Israeli foreign ministry officials have lent support to discussing final status now. But Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who has the ultimate decision, has not endorsed the idea.

"As far as Israel is concerned we would like very much to hear from one man, and that's Rabin," Dr. Erekat said.

Dr. Abdul Shafi told Israelis on Friday there could be no peace in the Middle East unless they give up East Jerusalem.

"If Israel maintains its position regarding East Jerusalem, I think it will kill the peace process," Dr. Abdul Shafi said in an interview with Voice of Israel radio.

"Israel should concede the Palestinian right in East Jerusalem," he said.

Israel "annexed" the eastern sector of Jerusalem after the 1967 war and refused to discuss the status of Jerusalem at least until the Palestinians have carried out two years of self-government in most of the occupied territories.

Gazan shot dead

OCCUPIED GAZA (Agencies) — A Palestinian shot by Israeli troops in a clash at a soccer game in an occupied Gaza Strip refugee camp died in hospital Friday, Palestinians said.

They said Israeli soldiers rushed onto a soccer pitch in the Rafah refugee camp on Tuesday and opened fire after spectators threw stones at army undercover troops in the crowd.

Faichi Abu Khader, 35, was shot in the head and evacuated to hospital in Israel where he died on Friday, Palestinians said.

The army said it was checking the incident.

In Rafah, a Palestinian clan staged a rare march Friday to protest the killing of their son at the hands of masked Palestinian militants who accused him of collaborating, Arab reporters said.

More than 300 members of the Abu Hussein family marched through the streets of Rafah refugee camp carrying weapons, axes and knives. They chanted slogans against the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and threatened to revenge the death.

Arafat Hussein, a 37-year-old driver, was killed three days ago by activists after he was accused of helping Israeli undercover soldiers ambush Samir Shaath on July 8.

Mr. Shaath, 23, was the commander of the Gaza Branch of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Mr. Shaath was wanted for armed attacks against the army and for killing suspected Palestinian collaborators.

Ekeus holds talks with Aziz, Sahaf

BAGHDAD (AP) — U.N. envoy Rolf Ekeus met with Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz Friday in an attempt to resolve the dispute over missile surveillance and reduce the threat of allied attack on Iraq.

Mr. Ekeus would not discuss the talks, but other U.N. sources, speaking anonymously, said Iraq was still refusing to accept the Security Council's Gulf war ceasefire Resolution 715, which calls for a long-term monitoring of Baghdad's weapons programme.

An Iraqi official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Baghdad was not sure if any recommendation by the U.N. special commission to lift U.N. trade sanctions would get past U.S. veto power in the Security Council.

Mr. Ekeus, Swedish head of the special commission supervising destruction of Iraq's non-conventional weapons, talked with Foreign Minister Mohammed Saeed Al Sahaf soon after arrival in Baghdad on Thursday.

Mr. Ekeus met early Friday with Mr. Sahaf, and with Mr. Aziz, President Saddam Hussein's main international negotiator. He talked with Mr. Aziz again in the evening.

United Nations officials said earlier that Mr. Ekeus would meet Mr. Aziz only if some progress was made in the talks with the foreign minister.

Tim Trevan, spokesman for the special commission, said Thursday that the United Nations did

not intend to compromise.

Iraq wants a commitment that the trade sanctions imposed by the U.N. after Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait will be lifted, before it accepts certain terms of the long-term monitoring.

Government-controlled Iraqi news media on Friday cautioned Mr. Ekeus against expecting concessions from Baghdad, unless he has something to offer in return.

Mr. Trevan said Thursday in Baghdad: "There is no compromise formula, there are no ifs, ands, or buts. ... Iraq must comply with all Security Council resolutions."

On Jan. 17, after Iraq blocked U.N. inspection flights, the United States fired 45 missiles at a Baghdad factory linked to a nuclear weapons programme.

Last month, the United States launched cruise missiles at an intelligence headquarters building in Baghdad in retaliation for an alleged Iraqi-backed plot to assassinate former president George Bush during his April visit to Kuwait. Iraq has denied involvement.

In New York, U.N. and Iraqi negotiators suspended negotiations on a draft agreement to allow Baghdad to sell \$1.6 billion of Iraqi negotiators said the talks would resume after consultations with Baghdad, but no date was set.

Proceeds of the sale are to go

(Continued on page 10)

Political crisis, violence hit Somalia relief efforts

Combined agencies

MOGADISHU — As political divisions over the U.N. coalition's mission deepened, violence and insecurity stalled relief efforts, and aid workers see no early end in sight.

Rome has hinted it might withdraw its 2,400 peacekeepers from Somalia unless the United Nations more clearly defines the role of the foreign troops.

A top U.N. official warned that there would be devastating consequences if the world body's relief effort in Somalia ended in failure.

James Jonah, deputy secretary-general for political affairs, said the U.N. should not change its policy in Somalia and that military operations against forces loyal to fugitive Somali warlord Mohammad Farrah Aideed would continue in Mogadishu.

The United Nations cannot afford to bow to pressure from Gen. Aideed, because that would only encourage other warlords to challenge U.N. authority, he said.

Mr. Jonah said the U.N. operation was "no different from the operation in Kuwait."

"If we fail in Somalia, the repercussions will be devastating, not only in Somalia but throughout the world, because it would show the U.N. cannot sustain such operations."

Germany said Friday it was going ahead with plans to deploy some 1,700 troops in Somalia despite a rising number of incidents in which its soldiers have come under fire aimed at U.N. forces.

A spokesman for Chancellor Helmut Kohl said a main force of some 1,500 troops would begin flying to Mogadishu soon, despite

attacks by Somali rebels in the capital and shots fired at the German advance base in the north-central town of Belet Huen.

A senior Italian envoy said Gen. Bruno Loi, the Italian commander at the centre of the row between the U.N. and Italy, will remain in his post.

"They asked for Loi's head at a moment of clear emotion. For us there is no question of his withdrawal from Somalia," army Deputy Chief of Staff General Bruno Buscemi told the ANSA news agency in Mogadishu.

Gen. Buscemi, one of two envoys Rome has sent to Somalia for talks to try to resolve the row, also said there was currently "no concrete possibility" that Italy's troops would be withdrawn from Somalia or redeployed outside Mogadishu.

The United Nations had asked

Italy to withdraw Gen. Loi, who leads 2,600 Italians in the 23-nation U.N. mission in Somalia. U.N. diplomats have accused him of taking orders from Rome rather than the U.N. command in the African country.

Italy refused, saying it was a matter of national sovereignty. Foreign Minister Beniamino Andreatta and Defence Minister Fabio Fabbri have said Italy was committed to its mission in Somalia but wanted the U.N.'s methods clarified.

Aid agencies, meanwhile, resumed deliveries of food Friday this seaside capital but trucks were heavily guarded. An estimated 100,000 people depend on food aid in the city.

Other programmes in Mogadishu continued only sporadically because of "insecurity and the very limited ability to safely move in the city," said a report by the

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), released Friday.

It said the capital was likely to remain unstable for months.

The capital plunged into near-anarchy after 24 Pakistani peacekeepers died in an ambush June 5. That fighting was blamed on gunmen loyal to Gen. Aideed.

Gun battles have raged almost every day, culminating in a massive rocket and cannon attack by U.S. helicopters and troops July 12 on a villa purportedly used as a command centre by Aided fighters.

Mobs outraged by the raid, which the International Red Cross said killed 57 Somalis, retaliated by killing four foreign journalists covering the scene.

Way open for \$160m in loans to Jordan

Majali reaffirms commitment to economic recovery programme

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The way has been cleared for Jordan to receive a \$160 million World Bank/Japanese loan following the approval by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank of the measures undertaken by the Kingdom in implementation of the economic restructuring programme agreed with the IMF, senior officials said Friday.

The World Bank will be contributing \$80 million of the loan and the Japanese government will match it with an equal amount.

Ahmad Shakour Sha'lan, an executive director at the IMF who was visiting Jordan, informed the government of the approval of the Kingdom's request for an extension of the deadline for the implementation of certain economic measures included in the restructuring programme, Finance Minister Sami Gammo said (see separate story).

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali met with Mr. Sha'lan on Thursday and reaffirmed his government's commitment to implementing the Kingdom's restructuring programme.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, quoted Dr. Majali as saying that his government "is keen on continuing the implementation of the programme in cooperation with the private sector in the country and to expand economic cooperation with other countries."

The reaffirmation came against the backdrop of contentions by some Jordanians that with the departure of Basel Jaraneh who served as finance minister for most part of the economic adjustment programme launched in 1988, there could be a dilution of the Kingdom's commitment to the programme.

During Mr. Sha'lan's visit, Jordan and IMF reviewed the progress in the implementation of the economic restructuring programme, Mr. Gammo said.

The IMF official also briefed Jordan on the IMF board's debate on Jordan's economy and the measures undertaken by the Kingdom as well as other issues of concern to Amman.

Mr. Jaraneh left office in late May when the Majali government took office. Mr. Gammo succeeded him.

Petra said Mr. Sha'lan commended Jordan's implementation of the economic programme and described the Kingdom as a model for developing countries.

He noted that Jordan has been successful in reducing the deficits in its budget and balance of payments as well as in stabilising inflation without foreign assistance as was the case prior to the Gulf crisis of 1990-91, Petra said.

Mr. Sha'lan, who left Amman Friday, was quoted as saying by Reuters that Jordan, which brought in the IMF to assist it in 1989 after failing to service its external debt, had also achieved remarkable progress "by any standards."

"Jordan did remarkably well...the budget deficit was well in excess of 18 per cent of GDP...it was initially targeted to go to 13 per cent in 1992...the actual outcome was 4.5 per cent," he told Reuters.

Mr. Gammo noted that the approval of Jordan's request for extension of the implementation of certain measures in the programme meant that the way was new clear for the Kingdom's request for the \$180 million loan. He did not say when Jordan could expect the loan to be released.

The finance minister said the loan would be used to improve the Kingdom's energy and water sectors.

Jordan gets extension of Paris Club talks

By P.V. Vivekanand

Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan has secured an extension for debt rescheduling negotiations with the Paris Club of creditor governments and state-run agencies on payments due between July 1993 and December 1994.

The Kingdom was supposed to have finalised an agreement with the creditors before the end of July, but its request for an extension until February 1993 was granted by the Paris Club.

"A meeting with the Paris Club scheduled for this month has been cancelled after the extension was granted," Finance Minister Sami Gammo told the Jordan Times Friday.

According to Dr. Fahed Al Fanek, a noted columnist and economist, the amount that would be on the table for rescheduling during the February discussions covers the payments due — principal and interest — to Paris Club members during the 18-month period between June 1993 and December — around \$650 million.

A similar amount owed and due for payment to the Paris Club until June 1993 was rescheduled in early 1992.

Dr. Fanek said Jordao would have to have a certification from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that the Kingdom was abiding by the IMF-prescribed economic restructuring programme before it could start the negotiations in February.

However, securing the IMF green light does not pose a serious problem for Jordan, which is often cited by the international watchdog as a showcase success of adherence to IMF programmes.

Mr. Gammo said the Council of Ministers had approved an agreement that the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) reached with the London Club in June covering all the Kingdom's commercial debts.

"We have started the process of finalising the agreement" — which involves bilateral talks with the 80 or so commercial banks and agencies grouped under the London Club umbrella — the minister said.

According to CBJ figures, Jordan's total foreign debts stood at JD 5,203.1 million (\$7,595 million), including contracted but non-disbursed loans, on Dec. 31, 1992.

Dr. Fanek said between \$500 million and \$750 million remained contracted but not disbursed, and hence the officially quoted debt figure of around \$7 billion.

The CBJ figures, as of Dec. 31, 1992, showed: Long-term loans (including already rescheduled repayments) amounted to JD 4,803.6 million (\$7,012.5 million), bonds JD 156.6 million (\$228.6 million) and leasing contracts (Royal Jordanian aircraft) JD 246.8 million (\$360.4 million).

A split-up showed that the Kingdom owed JD 378.6 million (\$552 million) to Arab governments and development funds (governments JD 32.8 million, the Saudi Fund for Development JD 119.5 million and the Iraqi Fund for Development JD 9.9 million).

The Kingdom's debts to industrialised countries stood at JD 2,668 million (\$3,895 million), including governments as well as export credit agencies. Of these, JD 635.2 million (\$927.3 million) in principal and JD 163.4 million (\$238.5 million) in interest have already been rescheduled.

Japan figured as the largest creditor of Jordan, accounting for JD 904.6 million (\$1,320.8 million), followed by the U.S. with JD 466.5 million (\$681 million), France JD 414.4 million (\$604.5 million), the United Kingdom with JD 379.8 million (\$554.1 million) and Germany with JD 284.8 million (\$415.6 million).

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2 Middle East News



Members of the underground Black Panthers movement in the West Bank (File photo)

Palestinians united to fight Israel, but fear infighting

BY Nicolas B. Tatro
The Associated Press

RAFAH, Occupied Gaza Strip — Ashraf Jamil Hussein Sindi is one of the angry young men of Gaza.

A few years ago, he was a waiter in a Tel Aviv restaurant. Today, he cradles a Kalashnikov automatic rifle in his lap and says he has been on the run from the Israeli army for five months after attacking soldiers.

"I want to die for Palestine," said Sindi, 26, who said he spent three years in Israel's Ketzioz prison, where he dropped allegiance to the mainstream Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and became a Muslim fundamentalist warrior.

"I like belonging to the Islamic Jihad because it is violent," he said.

He is one of scores of underground fighters known as "matlabin" (wanted). They have acquired an almost romantic nothing-to-lose image in the streets of Gaza, where they are treated as heroes out of what seems to be equal measures of fear and respect.

Militants, particularly in Gaza's crowded refugee camps, are gaining strength just as older, more moderate Palestinian politicians are trying to negotiate a self-rule agreement under which Israel would pull back its troops.

Their violent acts promise more turmoil in the occupied territories even if a peace agreement is reached.

In his Khan Yunis headquarters a few kilometres north of here, Israeli Colonel Yoash Rubin has a wanted poster showing more than 100 Palestinian activists.

Twenty-two of the faces have been blotted out by red X's.

Some were arrested and a few fled to Egypt, he explained. Others were killed by special units named "Cherry" and "Samson," which have been accused by human rights groups of carrying out extra-judicial executions in some cases.

Six months ago, Col. Yoash said, the army was losing control. Shooting attacks were a daily occurrence. The army called in reinforcements, set up observation posts and dispatched special units against about 130 leading activists in his sector.

"We succeeded in eliminating 50 per cent of the wanted guys," he said. "Now, there is no problem. We can go anywhere we want, day or night."

His wanted poster is marked "secret." Army spokesmen said Israel concealed the names and faces so as not to tip off activists they were being hunted.

PLO and Islamic activists are united in fighting Israeli soldiers. But their differences over the Arab-Israeli talks run deep, and the prospect of an agreement with Israel could ignite war among the factions.

Masked militants have killed far more Arabs than Israelis, 54 to 12, so far this year.

"We are not afraid of occupation, but of ourselves," said Hussein Jumaa Edris Awad, 25.

He was one of a dozen activists from at least three different Palestinian factions who gathered to speak with a reporter in a simple stone house with a corrugated plastic roof in Rafah's Shabura refugee camp.

They sipped sweet tea and showed off their arsenal. One unscrewed the pin from a grenade, saying afterward

with a smile that it was a dud. Another flicked the safety on and off a pistol an AK-47 assault rifle was passed from one to another.

A 10-year-old boy hovered nervously at the door. His job was to ferry weapons in and out of the room. At one point, he tucked a small, black automatic in the back of his jeans and pulled his shirt down to conceal it.

Awad, who claimed he had been wanted for three months, said the nature of the battle against occupation had changed dramatically since the early days of the uprising in December 1987, when large crowds poured into the streets.

"In the beginning, the intifada was a mass revolt. Today it is controlled by the factions and carried out by the matlabin (wanted)," said Awad, a leader of the Fateh Hawks, a group loyal to PLO leader Yasser Arafat.

Awad, a college dropout with a stubble beard and close-cropped black hair, views Mr. Arafat as "my president." He hopes the PLO and Israel will reach a peace agreement so that he can get married, settle down and "have a son to carry on my name."

Sindi, who lost his right arm maiming a grenade, rejected any idea of compromise and said Jews should live under Islamic rule.

Awad and Sindi agreed on one thing: Peace between Israel and the PLO would touch off bloodshed among Palestinian factions.

"If there is peace with Israel, there will be a civil war here," said Sindi, looking across the room at Awad. "Of course, we will kill each other. It is known," said Awad with a shrug.

Cyprus banks on EC entry irrespective of division

BRUSSELS (R) — President Glafcos Clerides of Cyprus said Friday he was banking on the island joining the European Community (EC) whether or not there was a solution to the country's 19-year division.

Mr. Clerides said he hoped the prospect of joining the EC would stimulate peace efforts on the island but that tying membership to a final solution to partition was not acceptable.

Cyprus has been split since 1974 when Turkish troops seized its northern third in the wake of a short-lived coup in Nicosia backed by the military junta then ruling Greece.

The EC's Executive Commission in Brussels said on June 30 Cyprus had to find a lasting settlement to its political problems before formal EC entry talks could begin and that the situation would be reviewed in 1995.

"I do not accept the linkage," Mr. Clerides said. "However, there is a very clear-cut provision that there will be a reassessment in 1995," he told a news conference.

He was speaking after Wednesday's meeting with European Commission President Jacques Delors, Mr. Delors' colleague Hans van den Broek, Belgian Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene and European Affairs Robert Urbain.

"They (the EC) will find out who is responsible for no progress," he said in a pessimistic appraisal of the chances for success in U.N.-backed peace talks.

"They will not penalise me by not allowing Cyprus to join the European Community... if the other (Turkish) side is being negative, certainly I will not be penalised for that."

A commission spokesman declined to comment on Clerides' interpretation of the pledge to a reassessment in 1995.

Asked whether membership was realistic for a divided island, Mr. Clerides said the EC could legally bring the whole country into the fold even if the Turkish-controlled part did not effectively participate.

He ruled out any other formula, saying: "If the Republic of Cyprus is to join, it will be the whole republic of Cyprus but effective implementation will only take place in those areas under the control of the government of Cyprus."

Mr. Clerides said exploratory talks should begin by September or October on a long list of issues such as economic adjustments and legislative reform to fall in line with a mass of EC rules. Formal membership talks would come later.

He said he had urged the community to get more involved in the peace process, both to see how both sides were behaving,

ADC and FBI confer on anti-Arab incidents

WASHINGTON (USIA) — A rash of anti-Arab hate incidents in the United States since the World Trade Centre bombing prompted American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) leaders to request "a pre-emptive meeting" with officials of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), ADC President Albert Mokhiber said Thursday.

Mr. Mokhiber said he and ADC Legal Affairs Director Gregory Nojem met with Neil Gallagher and Mike Kahoe of the FBI's Bureau of Intelligence in an attempt to head off any wave of hysteria stemming from the New York incident.

"We wanted to take some proactive steps, to be sure the FBI is alert to the number of small instances that have surfaced, and make sure that there is not an explosion of these problems across the country," he explained.

"We're pleased with the meeting. We share mutually our concern about the safety and well-being of our community. The FBI shared our concern on this issue, as they have in the past," Mr. Mokhiber said.

He said that any time there's a conflict in the Middle East "there's a backlash against the American-Arab community."

He said Americans in the United States have experienced an increase since the World Trade Centre bombing.

"Fortunately, it has not been as great as it was in the past, but there have been enough incidents reported to prompt our meeting with the FBI," he said.

Mr. Mokhiber said he was assured by the FBI that "we would not be investigated as

Arab Americans or Muslims based on their national origin, religion, or political views... that we will not become scapegoats... that there will not be political fishing expeditions into our community."

At a recent conference of some 3,000 Christian Arab Americans in California, Mr. Mokhiber said, he found "a great deal of concern... about this new anti-Arab fervor. So it was an assurance that I think was very necessary at this time in our community."

Mr. Mokhiber said since the World Trade Centre bombing, Arab Americans have been harassed for their mode of dress, have received death threats, and a mosque in New Jersey has been vandalised.

The rise in the climate of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim hysteria in some instances can be attributed to printed media and "supposed experts on terrorism" who appear on television "to expound an Israeli point of view," he said.

"What we're seeing in the press — these articles — these op-ed (opinion) pieces — so-called terrorism experts who are basically peddling hate against our community are leading towards the atmosphere that allows the 'crazies' to come out and act against us. It's a very dangerous situation," he pointed out.

Mr. Mokhiber cited other instances that denigrated the Arab-American community, such as a Washington Post cartoon July 3. "That kind of racism adds to the general atmosphere," he said, stressing that he "wanted to be very careful not to stereotype the press as the press has stereotyped us."

Kollek fires Amirav for seeking 're-divided city'

JERUSALEM'S Israeli mayor, Teddy Kollek Wednesday stripped Meretz city councillor Moshe Amirav of all his municipal responsibilities in response to Amirav's recent call for dual Israeli-Arab sovereignty over the city and the establishment of two separate municipalities.

Amirav is responsible for the city's roads and transportation. He, together with fellow Meretz councillor Sarah Kaminker and others, recently established a new political movement called "Peace for the Saké of Jerusalem," which in a press statement claimed the annexation of Jerusalem as "illegal, and (based on) the denial of political rights to the Palestinian people of East Jerusalem."

The movement is trying to put together an Arab-Jewish list to run in the upcoming municipal election.

Kollek said he had taken this step because Amirav's recent statements violated a commitment made in January to avoid political statements opposing the consensus held by the wall-to-

wall municipal coalition.

Amirav said yesterday he accepts Kollek's decision. "We are, in fact, now an ideological opposition, and if he hadn't done this, I probably should have resigned the post on my own," he said. He noted, however, that Kollek's move had little significance, given that it was so close to the election.

Amirav said that if the PLO would support his list and encourage eastern Jerusalem Arabs to vote for it, it could win five seats in the city council. He and other group members are to fly to Tunis within the next week or two to try to tell Yasser Arafat on the list, he said.

With polls predicting the right and the religious gaining strength in the election, his list could prove crucial to Kollek, should the latter win the mayoral race and have to scramble to form a coalition.

Amirav conceded, however, that without PLO backing, it might not pay for the list to run — *The Jerusalem Post*.

NEWS IN BRIEF

U.S. to address Israeli concern over shipping

WASHINGTON (USIA) — State Department Spokesman Michael McCurry said Thursday that Israel has complained to the United States about the U.S. navy's effort to enforce United Nations trade sanctions against Iraq. U.S., French and British Navy ships have been maintaining an international naval blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, which links the Red Sea with the Gulf of Persia, stopping, inspecting and often diverting cargo ships. According to the July 15 New York Times, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres told a parliamentary committee that diverting Israeli ships bound for Eilat at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba to Mediterranean ports was unacceptable. "Israel has made known to us its concerns that the embargo on Iraq impedes access to the port of Eilat," Mr. McCurry said. "We're seeking to address Israeli concerns without jeopardising the integrity of the embargo of goods to Iraq." The spokesman said he could not provide a detailed explanation of how the enforcement of U.N. sanctions on Iraq was being conducted. "We're doing the best job we can to help enforce the U.N.-ordered sanctions on Iraq," Mr. McCurry said. "We do the best job we can in an area that clearly has got multiple access points, multiple ports."

Khartoum summons suspects in coup bid

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudanese authorities have summoned 20 people, including the country's former army commander-in-chief, to report to a special commission investigating what it says was a recent plot to overthrow the government. The summons, carried in the local press and signed by commission chairman Abdul Rahman Ahmad Ibrahim, gives the 20 men one week from Thursday, July 15, to comply. Otherwise, they will be tried in absentia, the statement warns. The list carried the names of former army commander-in-chief General Fathi Ahmad Ali, former deputy chief of staff for operations General Abdul Rahman Saeed, and former head of security Major General Hadi Bushra as well as those of 11 ex-officers and six civilians. In another development, officials here said a date will be determined next week for the trial of 13 other suspects arrested in mid-May on charges of plotting to blow up strategic installations and to assassinate certain political leaders. If convicted the suspects face penalties of death or life in prison.

Saudis execute Afghan, Pakistani drug smugglers

DUBAI (R) — A Pakistani and an Afghan convicted of smuggling heroin into Saudi Arabia were beheaded in Riyadh on Friday, the Interior Ministry said. The ministry, in separate statements issued by the official Saudi Press Agency, identified the men as Khalil Al Rahman Mohammad, a Pakistani, and Qalab Adam Mohammad, an Afghan who was caught carrying the heroin in his stomach.

Saharan chief sides with Morocco

RABAT (AFP) — A Western Sahara tribal chief allied with the Polisario Front has gone over to the Moroccan government, press reports said here Friday. They named him as Ahmad Salem Ould Al Bahir of the Sahrawi clan the Rguibet Al Mouline. He was part of a delegation of desert sheikhs close to Polisario who took part in the latest abortive talks in Geneva on who would be eligible to vote in a referendum on self-determination. L'Opinion newspaper said Mr. Bahir was a great expert on the region's tribes. News of his change of sides came as pro-Morocco and pro-Polisario tribal chiefs were due to meet in Western Sahara's chief town Al Ayun to establish criteria for identifying the Sahrawi electorate.

Arrow missile launch aborted

TEL AVIV (AP) — An attempt to launch and innovative Israeli air-to-air antimissile missile was aborted at the last minute Wednesday, Israeli army radio reported. It was to be the sixth experimental launch of the U.S.-funded Hertz, or Arrow missile. The Arrow is the first missile designed to destroy enemy missiles in the air. The United States funded its development as part of the "Arrow" Strategic Defence Initiative. A navy ship launched a simulated chemical warhead off the coast of Israel at 11:30 a.m. local time (8:30 GMT), but the Arrow was not launched immediately afterwards to intercept it as planned, the radio said. The radio said failed attempts were not unusual in the history of the Arrow, noting the first successful launch attempt was last winter. Engineers at Israel Aircraft Industries were investigating the launch failure, the radio said. The launch was rescheduled for the end of August, it said.

Shoddy maintenance blamed for 1991 crash

OTTAWA (AFP) — The 1991 crash of a Canadian DC-8-62 aircraft carrying Nigerian pilgrims to Mecca has been blamed on shoddy maintenance work by the aircraft owner's maintenance workers. All 247 Nigerian passengers and 14 Canadian crew died in the July 11, 1991, crash at King Abdul Aziz International Airport in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. According to an inquiry by the Saudi government, released Thursday simultaneously in Jeddah and by Canada's Transportation Safety Board, maintenance crews knew that tyre pressure was low four days before the disaster.

Egypt gunmen kill Christian

ASSIUT (R) — Gunmen killed a Christian shopkeeper and shot at a plainclothes police detective in separate incidents in Upper Egypt, security sources said on Friday. The sources said two unidentified gunmen shot and killed Mubsen Maurice Yassa, a Christian shopkeeper in the militant stronghold of Dayrat 280 kilometres south of Cairo, as he closed his family's shop Thursday evening. In Aswan in southern Egypt, a gunman opened fire on Farouk Badari, a senior detective, as he drove home on the Nile-side corniche from the police station where he works. Mr. Badari was unhurt and the attacker fled. Police suspect Muslim militants are behind both incidents, the sources added.

Pakistan expels suspected extremists

CAIRO (AP) — Pakistani authorities are deporting about 250 workers of an Afghan relief agency as suspected Muslim extremists, a government-owned newspaper reported Thursday. Al-Ahram, Egypt's largest paper, quoted Arabs in Peshawar, in northwestern Pakistan, as saying most of the suspects are Egyptians but some also are Algerians and Tunisians. The newspaper did not identify the agency other than say it is based in Peshawar and works inside Afghanistan. Cells of fundamentalists opposed to Egypt's largely secular government work out of the Peshawar area, training extremists in the use of arms.

Growing momentum in Israel's ruling party for talks with PLO

By Karin Laub
The Associated Press

TEL AVIV — "Who is against talking to the PLO?" a legislator from Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's Labour Party asked about 35 colleagues in a meeting this week.

Only one hand went up. The informal poll illustrates the growing push in Israel's governing party towards negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as the only way to break the deadlock in the Middle East peace talks.

Advocates of talking to the PLO leadership say Palestinian negotiators in Washington are middlemen without authority, and that PLO

chairman Yasser Arafat can offer concessions and make a deal.

"The Palestinian negotiators all get their instructions from Tunis, and in general, mediators take a cut," said Labour legislator Rafi Edri, who asked for the show of hands at the Labour meeting. The PLO, long branded a "terrorist" organisation by Israel, has its headquarters in the Tunisian capital.

"I'd prefer to talk directly to Tunis, without paying the cut," Mr. Edri said.

The doves in Israel today have a majority in the 18-member cabinet and among the 62 coalition legislators. They have not yet dared to challenge Mr. Rabin openly

over the issue, but a showdown seems inevitable if there is no breakthrough soon in the talks.

In the meantime, the doves are exerting increasing pressure on Mr. Rabin to soften his opposition to negotiations with the PLO.

Right after Mr. Rabin took office last year, they raised the issue in the cabinet, a historic first. Months later, they pushed a bill through parliament lifting the ban on meetings with the PLO, though Mr. Rabin initially tried to delay the vote.

And they make sure the issue remains at the centre of public debate here.

This week, a government source leaked to an Israeli newspaper that a senior Israeli official has been meet-

ing secretly with PLO leaders, and that the contacts have Mr. Rabin's blessing.

Akiva Eldor, political commentator for the Haaretz daily, said the motivation of the leak "was to impose the PLO on Rabin, to include the issue on the public agenda and to embarrass Rabin."

Mr. Rabin's office issued a lukewarm denial, but the story was the main topic on talk shows and in editorials.

Mr. Rabin believes that if he accepts the PLO as a negotiating partner, Mr. Arafat will demand talking about a Palestinian state immediately, instead of moving slowly in two stages, with Palestinian self-rule as an interim settlement.

"Once you sit with Yasser Arafat, he will say, No. 1

Palestinian state, No. 2 its capital Jerusalem and No. 3 the right of return," by Palestinian refugees, Housing Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, a Rabin ally, told the Associated Press.

Mr. Rabin believes Arafat has no interest in Palestinian autonomy because it would strengthen an independent leadership in the occupied territories that could become a serious rival to the PLO.

Mr. Rabin's critics counter that Mr. Arafat has an interest in seeing the talks succeed quickly, even with autonomy as an interim step because the PLO's Muslim fundamentalist rivals feed on failure and every day without agreement strengthens them.

A new element of the Israeli public debate is its

pragmatism, considering that for years the PLO was reviled as enemy number one, a ruthless "terror" organisation bent on destroying the Jewish state.

Today, the argument has shifted from "whether" to "when" to talk to the PLO. Even Mr. Rabin does not rule out eventual negotiations. He just says the time is not right yet.

Journalist Amnon Levy, describing this week's meeting of Labour legislators, noted that those opposed to talking to the PLO cited tactical, not ideological reasons.

"The terrible hostility that once was there against the man with the stubble on his face (Arafat) has disappeared," Mr. Levy wrote.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 73111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Les Aventures de l'Espace
18:30 Envoyé Spécial
19:00 News in French
19:15 Fenêtre sur
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Super Bloopers
21:00 Perspectives
21:30 Varieties
22:00 News in English
22:20 Feature Film: "Backlash"

PRAYER TIMES

04:04 Fajr
05:36 (Sunrise) Duha
12:42 Asr
16:22 Maghrib
21:15 Isha

7H10L10M9.3W9CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church, Swifich, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church, Tel. 634590
Church of the Annunciation, Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church, Tel. 661757
Terrence Church, Tel. 623666
Church of the Annunciation, Tel. 623541
Anglican Church, Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church, Tel. 711331
Armenian Orthodox Church, Tel. 713261
St. Ephraim Church, Tel. 717751
Armenian International Church, Tel. 632526
Evangelical Lutheran Church, Tel. 824328
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Tel. 823824, 654932
Church of Nazareth, Tel. 675991

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Normal summer weather will prevail and winds will be westerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly fresh and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 16 / 30
Aqaba 23 / 37
Deserts 15 / 35

Jordan Valley 21 / 37

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 30, Aqaba 36. Humidity readings: Amman 41 per cent, Aqaba 22 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Abdul Qader Al Lal 754046
Dr. Abbas Al Hakim 855446
Dr. Mahmoud Amir 888883
Dr. Abdul Aziz Taboun 660881
Fire pharmacy 661912
Fendous pharmacy 718336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Nairook pharmacy 626672
Al Salem pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Stacionary pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Shairari 248056
Al Quds Pharmacy (-)

ZARQA:
Dr. Tariq Hijawi 985445
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 691228
Blood Bank 75121
Highway Police 643402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 603030
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 661111
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 661101
Abdullah Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 771111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 660100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 642816
Ashik Maternity, J. Amn 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 62362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 664174
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 843945
Al-Musharraf Hospital 667227
The Islamic, Abdali 664127/59
Al-Ahl, Abdali 664144
Italian, Al-Muhajir 771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 77511/26
Army, Marka 89161/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA:
Zarga Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarga National Hospital (09)500560
Bin Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al-Hikmah Modern Hospital (09)99790

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Green Catholic Hospital (02)272725
Ibn Al-Nafies Hospital (02)247100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information department at the Queen Alia International Airport, Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:30 Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)
09:00 New Delhi (RJ)
10:15 Dhahran (RJ)
10:30 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:30 Ching, Aqaba (RJ)
10:30 Beirut (RJ)
11:00 Colombo (RJ)
11:00 Abu Dhabi, Doha (RJ)
11:00 Cairo (RJ)
12:05 Istanbul (RJ)
12:30 Paris, Brussels (RJ)
12:45 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
13:05 London (RJ)
13:55 Jeddah (RJ)
14:05 Damascus (RJ)
14:15 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
14:25 Abu Dhabi, Doha (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

11:30 Senae (Y)
12:30 Muscat, Doha (GP)
14:25 Rome (AZ)
17:45 Larnaca (CY)
18:30 Cairo (MS)
21:45 Dubai, Damascus (EM)
21:45 Larnaca (CY)
21:45 Paris, Damascus (AF)

DEPARTURES

Home News

Leaders agree to form unifying panel after 5-hour boisterous conferences

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Insisting that they should emerge with "something" from a five-hour conference aimed at unifying women's ranks, women leaders, trying to conduct business over the boisterous behaviour of attendees, Friday agreed to form a committee to implement the principles of a draft paper presented at the conference.

The proposal forwarded by women's activist Intisar Jardaneh called for the implementation of the draft paper which was prepared and presented by a committee formed earlier this year and for the representation of women from all sectors and unions in Jordan.

The draft paper, which took almost six months to research and prepare, is no different in content from that of the National Strategy for Women adopted last month. The difference is that the principles and objectives of the national strategy rely on the Jordanian Constitution, the National Charter and the Islamic Sharia, while the draft presented at the popular conference based its aspirations and aims on women's rights.

But both call for the implementation of the same objectives. The five-page draft paper called for the amendment of all laws and legislation that are inconsistent with women's rights; defending women's rights at work; encouraging women to join political parties; giving equal opportunities to males and females in the educational field; promoting social values and raising public awareness of women's rights.

"The split the women's movement is suffering from in the local arena is evidently being reflected in the conference," Ms. Jardaneh



Activists Thursday review issues towards unifying women's ranks at Women's Popular Conference (Petra photo)

said in obvious protest against the rising voices and chaos at the meeting held at Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation.

"We all came here with a yearning to at least achieve a unified formula that would bind women's efforts in Jordan and implement their aims."

"A unified formula" was in fact the main point of contention among women activists present at the conference.

On one side, some women called for a merger of the two women's unions in Jordan into one that represents all Jordanian women.

The other stream, which included presidents of both unions, Asma Khader and Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, strongly objected to this proposal and called for another binding formula to women's efforts and aspirations.

The final version to Ms. Jardaneh's proposal, which was nearly unanimously approved by

women participants, stipulated that the follow-up committee, that would be in charge of pursuing the implementation of the objectives called for in the draft paper, consist of representatives of the preparatory committee that prepared and chaired the Friday meeting, the General Union of Jordanian Women (GUJW), the Women's Union in Jordan (WUJ), the different government, women's committees and independent women personalities.

Another point of contention at the conference was what some women saw as unequal representation in all sectors and categories of the conference itself. Some complained that women chairing the meeting or those who took part in drafting the working paper were not elected; others pointed to the absence of women representatives from the refugee camps and the badia.

The committee that chaired the

meeting consisted of: Laila Naffa (Jordanian Communist Party), Huda Fakhouri (Jordanian Arab Democratic Party), Rifqa Dodin (writer), Suleimeh Qammas (Islamist-independent), and Ibrahim Al Amoush (Islamist from the Jordan Valley). Haifa Jamal (Jordanian People's Democratic Party) and Suhair Al Tal (independent) withdrew. Samira Fayyad, a representative of Muslim Brotherhood was absent.

Member of the Upper House of Parliament, Laila Sharaf, who left shortly before the conference came to an end, called earlier in her speech for the establishment of a unified movement that would overcome political differences and personal disputes "for the sake of realising a common objective: the woman's cause, society's cause," she said.

"This is our common dream that we yearn to achieve on the public and personal levels," she added.

Jordan invited to meeting on protecting war victims

AMMAN (J.T.) — Swiss Ambassador to Jordan Gian Federico Pedotti Thursday delivered to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a formal invitation to participate in a high level international conference on the protection of war victims.

By this initiative, the Swiss Federal Council wants to draw attention to the importance of international humanitarian law at a time when armed conflicts take place all over the planet, said a Swiss embassy press release.

According to the statement, the states which signed the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949 took the engagement to respect and to enforce the laws particularly concerning the protection of war victims. The conference's main objective is to remind the states of the obligations they contracted in this regard and to take steps to improve the implementation of humanitarian laws, said the release.

The conference will be presented a draft of the Final Declaration and a report established by the International Committee of the Red Cross, an impartial body of Swiss citizens, which is in charge of the application of the conventions and of the protection of victims.

Government experts from about 50 countries already met in Geneva at the end of April and prepared a draft declaration.

20th political party legalised Founders are prominent, liberal pan-Arabists

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordanian Arab Democratic Party (JADP) became Jordan's 20th legalised political party this week, some four months ahead of the Kingdom's first multi-party legislative elections in more than 20 decades. Composed of several prominent, liberal pan-Arab political personalities, the JADP is seen by observers as a high profile party because of the political experience of its founding members.

Although the date for the upcoming general elections has not been announced, most political observers expect the elections to take place in the first ten days of November.

Political parties are awaiting an announcement by the government of possible changes in the Election Law before they announce who their candidates are and where they will field them. The notion of one man-one-vote, a change in the number and composition of electoral districts and a possibility of holding primary elections have all been part of a well-publicised political debate between the government, political parties and the public since the beginning of the year.

Most of the pan-Arab left wing parties, a grouping to which the newly legalised JADP belongs, support fundamental changes in the current election law.

Main founders of JADP, Munes Razzaz, Mazen Al Saket, Huda Fakhouri, Mohammad Daoudieh and Samir Habashneh have all been politically active for more than a decade.

Two, Munes Razzaz, the party's secretary general and Mohammad Daoudieh, current director of the press at the Royal Hashemite Court, are well-known to the public through their work as journalists and writers. Mazen Saket, a former banker, was instrumental in bankers union politics, and Dr. Fakhouri, a prominent dentist and political activist, was one of twelve women who unsuccessfully ran in the 1989 parliamentary elections.

The party doctrine is based on a reformed concept of pan-Arab politics. Almost all of the party's members were former Baathists and more traditionally minded pan-Arabists (mostly Iraqi Baathists) who became disillusioned with what they saw as the lack of democratic workings of the party. Almost all the founding members are in their forties.

Mr. Saket and Dr. Fakhouri

were both unsuccessful candidates during the 1989 legislative elections. They ran in the third district of Amman and Balqa respectively.

The legalisation of JADP brings the number of liberal, pan-Arab and leftist parties to ten or half of all registered political parties.

In addition to JADP, they include the Jordanian Socialist Baath Party, Progressive Arab Baath Party, the Jordanian Communist Party, the Jordanian Democratic Socialist Party, the Freedom Party, the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party, the Jordanian Democratic People's Party and the Jordanian Democratic Progressive Party.

Other parties that have been officially registered with the Ministry of Interior include two Islamist parties, the Islamic Action Front and Dua'a or the Arab Democratic Islamic Movement; five conservative parties, Al Ahd, Al Watan, the Awakening (Yakaza), Jordanian National Alliance, and the Popular Unity Party; as well as three centrist parties which include Al Mustakbal, the Party for Justice and Progress and the Democratic Arab Unity Party.

Court rules to reinstate ex-officials retired by former minister

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A group of ex-senior Ministry of Education officials who won a Higher Court of Justice verdict for their reinstatement in their former posts are awaiting minor formalities before resuming their work with the ministry.

"We fought a decision by the former minister of education to retire us on pension for eight long months in the courts before we finally won our rights," said Mahdi Karans one of the 18-member group which sued the ministry.

Dr. Karans, who had served as director of education in Balqa governorate before the ministry decided to retire him along with other officials in September 1992, told the Jordan Times Friday that he and his colleagues are quite pleased with the court ruling and take pride in the Jordanian judiciary for serving justice.

"We have no problem in going back to work and in serving our country, but this depends on a Prime Ministry decision ordering the education ministry to reinstate us in light of last Wednesday's Higher Court of Justice verdict," he said.

In September 1992 former Minister of Education Thouban Hindawi retired 25 senior minis-

try employees who considered the move unjustified. According to Dr. Karans only 18 of the 25 retired decided to take the case to court.

The other seven decided to accept the decision, he added. "Our dossiers give witness to our high performance and our vast experience to justify our return to our posts," said Dr. Karans.

The court also decided that the 18 claimants be given back all their legal and financial rights lost since September last year.

Abdullah Hijazi told the Jordan Times that he was one of the seven who decided to sue the ministry, but added, "our group will now examine the court decision and submit a memorandum to the Prime Ministry demanding

the right to be reinstated along with the others."

"It is only reasonable to say that as long as the court had found the ministry's 1992 decision null and void and unjustified, that the government cancel the former administrative decision altogether and re-instate all the group members whether they sued the ministry or not," added Mr. Hijazi.

Commenting on the court decision Minister of Education and Higher Education Khaled Al Omari said the ministry would respect the court verdict, noting that he had high regard for the judiciary authority and its rulings. Dr. Karans said that he did not expect to return to duty before one month.

NHF Salt Handicraft Centre graduates 2nd batch of trainees in ceremony

AMMAN (J.T.) — The second batch of trainees at the Noor Al Hussein Foundation's (NHF) Salt Handicrafts Training Centre graduated Thursday in a ceremony patronised by Under Secretary of the Ministry of Education Munther Al Masri.

A show room in which handicraft items produced by students for permanent display was also inaugurated on the same occasion.

The 14 graduates have undergone a free three-year training and study programme at the centre in two areas of handicrafts production: ceramics and weaving. The centre will also extend its services to graduates by assisting them to start their own income-generating crafts schemes.

Launched as a joint project

between the Jordanian and Italian governments in 1987, the centre is administered by Noor Al Hussein Foundation in cooperation with the Salt Development Corporation (SDC) and the Italian Company for Technical Cooperation and Engineering (COTECNO).

Since May 1988, however, the centre has operated as part of the NHF National Handicrafts Development Project. Its mission is closely tied in with the overall NHF comprehensive and integrated approach to development, whereby traditionally-rooted and locally available resources are utilised, both to preserve Jordan's national heritage and to help craftsmen and women launch their income-generating schemes, to enhance their living standards, and to reinforcing

their self-reliance.

The Italian government has provided about JD one million in the first phase of the project to cover equipment purchases and the costs necessary for bringing Italian consultants to train craft teachers, and training Jordanians both at home and in Italy.

In 1989, five trainees in ceramics and weaving underwent eight months of specialised training in Italy.

In addition to training in ceramics and weaving, the centre operates as a school, offering courses in such topics as Arabic, English, Islamic education, general sciences, management, marketing and design.

As they stand now, the centre's activities encompass teaching and training, documentation and research, community services and

production.

The centre's free three-year training programme has been accredited by the Ministry of Education and is open to students from all parts of Jordan.

Housed in the SDC's Cultural Centre's building in downtown Salt, the SHTC is planning to supplement its existing weaving and ceramics training programme with similar programmes in jewelry, metalworks and glassworks. Some historical buildings in Salt will be renovated to accommodate new craft programmes, craft production units, shops and a showroom.

The first batch of graduates (22) finished their training programme in 1992, and according to centre sources, most of them have already started their own small-scale businesses.

Amman studies feasibility of recycling garbage to be used as fertiliser

By Hassan Aqeel
Petra

AMMAN — The Greater Amman Municipality has begun feasibility studies exploring the possibility of producing bio gas by fermenting waste at its garbage dump sites.

Municipality sources said help in this project is being sought from Danish firms and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and initial studies suggest that the project could be implemented early in 1994.

The municipality's garbage

Kingdom's population because they are being used by the municipalities of Amman, Ruseifa, Zarqa, Sahab, Marj Al Hammam, Al Sukhneh, Um Malhi, Al Muwaqar and more than 100 private firms said the sources.

Plans are underway to find eligible firms to recycle the waste to be used as fertiliser, added the sources.

The municipality is focusing attention on garbage collection and garbage processing and has recently re-organised its collection systems and purchased 10 new collection trucks.

In the course of these re-

organisational plans the municipality distributed an additional 5,500 trash receptacles in various districts, they said.

The sources added that more than 65 per cent of the JD 6 million annual allocation for sanitation services goes to garbage collecting. This sum, they added, constitutes 10 per cent of the overall municipality's annual budget.

Recent studies conducted on the garbage dumped at various districts concluded that plastics, paper, nylon and metals are among those materials that could be recycled and re-used in Jordan, the sources said.

Japan supports JEA training course

AMMAN (J.T.) — A training course for Arab countries' engineers in the field of electric power was inaugurated at the Electric Training Centre of the Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) on Thursday in a ceremony held at JEA and attended by Hajime Tanaka, minister-counsellor of the embassy of Japan in Jordan.

The training course will be supported by the government of Japan through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) including financing at approximately JD 85,000.

To be held once each year from 1992 to 1996, the course aims at providing the participants from Arab countries with an opportunity to upgrade relevant techniques and knowledge in the field of electric power.

This year the course will be held for 17 weeks.

In the past six years, Japan has extended cooperation to the Electric Training Centre of JEA, consisting of dispatching 6 Japanese experts, providing modern training equipment worth approximately JD 3 million and training in Japan of 15 JEA staff.

Japan also dispatched 3 young Japanese volunteers to JEA, one for the Aqaba Steam Power Station and others for the Zarqa Steam Power Station.

Last May the Japanese After-care Survey Team visited JEA to work out the details of the After-care Programme for the project on the Electric Training Centre.

Japan has to date offered technical cooperation to Jordan amounting to over JD 50 million.

Italy grants Jordan \$10m loan to develop rural areas

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan is to get \$10.03 million from the Rome-based International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as soft loan to help finance projects benefiting families in the rural regions of the country.

Jordan's Ambassador to Italy Hassan Abu Nimeh, who signed the deal with IFAD, voiced the Kingdom's appreciation for the loan, noting that Jordan was looking forward to increased

cooperation with IFAD to promote socio-economic development. The loan will be used to help families in the rural regions diversify the sources of their income by embarking on different income-generating schemes.

The project, expected to cost \$19.68 million will benefit nearly 18,000 families in the rural regions.

The balance will be covered through another loan from the

Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development which will offer \$8.1 million, while the Jordanian government will contribute a sum of \$1.6 million.

The loan will be re-lent to families to carry out such projects as livestock breeding food production and other projects.

Under the plan, rural families will get training on ways to exploit water and improve food production in cooperation with the Noor Al Hussein Foundation.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Majali meets with ALESCO chief

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali Thursday received in his office Director General of the Arab League Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ALESCO) Mohammad Al Mili Al Ibrahim who is currently on an official visit to Jordan. The meeting which was attended by Minister of Education and Higher Education Khaled Al Omari focused on scopes of

cooperation between Jordan and ALESCO

Jordan, Eritrea to form diplomatic ties

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree has been issued endorsing the government's decision to establish diplomatic relations with the newly independent state of Eritrea. Coinciding with the decree, the governments of Jordan and Eritrea issued official communiques declaring their decision to promote mutual cooperation at all levels.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition by Korean artist Hong-Lyeon Lee at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by Syrian artist Sakhr Farzat at the Balka Art Gallery, Fuhes City.
- ★ Art exhibition by Syrian artist Nidal Al Sawasi at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by Jamal Khmish and Jihad Abu Suliman at the Housing Bank Gallery.
- ★ Art exhibition by Fadwa Al Nabulsi at the Phoenix Art Gallery.

LECTURE

- ★ Lecture, in Arabic, entitled "The Crisis of Arabs and Muslims — Is There Any Future?" by Dr. Ahmad Al Majid at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation — 7:30 p.m.

JERASH FESTIVAL

- ★ Arabic poetry recital at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 5:30 p.m.
- ★ Concerts by Lebanese singer Ragheb Alameh at 8:30 p.m. at the South Theatre of Jerash.
- ★ Concert by the orchestra of the National Music Conservatory at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8 p.m.
- ★ Arabic play for children entitled "Nabil and Hisham at School" at 11 noon at the Palace of Culture.

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Wrong approach at high quarters

THE LATEST attack on Somali warlord Mohammad Farah Aideed headquarters culminated in the death of scores of people rather than in apprehending him. This was not the first time massacres were committed in the course of attempts to capture Gen. Aideed, a development that already caused disarray in the Western countries themselves not to mention in other countries participating in the United Nations peace keeping forces deployed there ostensibly to bring hope to the starving Somali people. The Italian government was the first to voice concern about the turn of events in Somalia and has threatened to withdraw its forces from that country unless command of the international force is shifted into safer hands. The trigger-happy U.S. troops now deployed under U.N. command have obviously exacerbated the already tense situation in Somalia and made the rationale behind the international intervention a suspect. Instead of helping the people of Somalia who face famine and other deprivations, the U.S. actions in that country are only helping to add to them. It makes little difference for the Somalis if they die from hunger or from bullets. Killing Somalis on the pretext of changing the political regime there makes a mockery of the initial justifications for the U.N. intervention in the country.

It will be recalled that the international community expressed satisfaction, and with a reason, when the international organisations decided to help out the innocent civilian population of Somalia and bring to an end their hunger and agonies. As a matter of fact, the majority of the Somalis themselves also welcomed the international move because they saw in it every hope for ending their suffering under irresponsible leadership. But one is at a loss to justify the kind of actions that the U.N. troops in that country are performing under the guise of assisting Somalis to end the tyrannical rule of their leadership. What is alarming is that this pattern of U.S. intervention in Somalia and elsewhere in the world suggests that the United States prefers to shoot first and ask questions later. The last thing that any country anticipated from the new U.S. administration of American President Bill Clinton was the deployment of American armed forces in defence of certain policies.

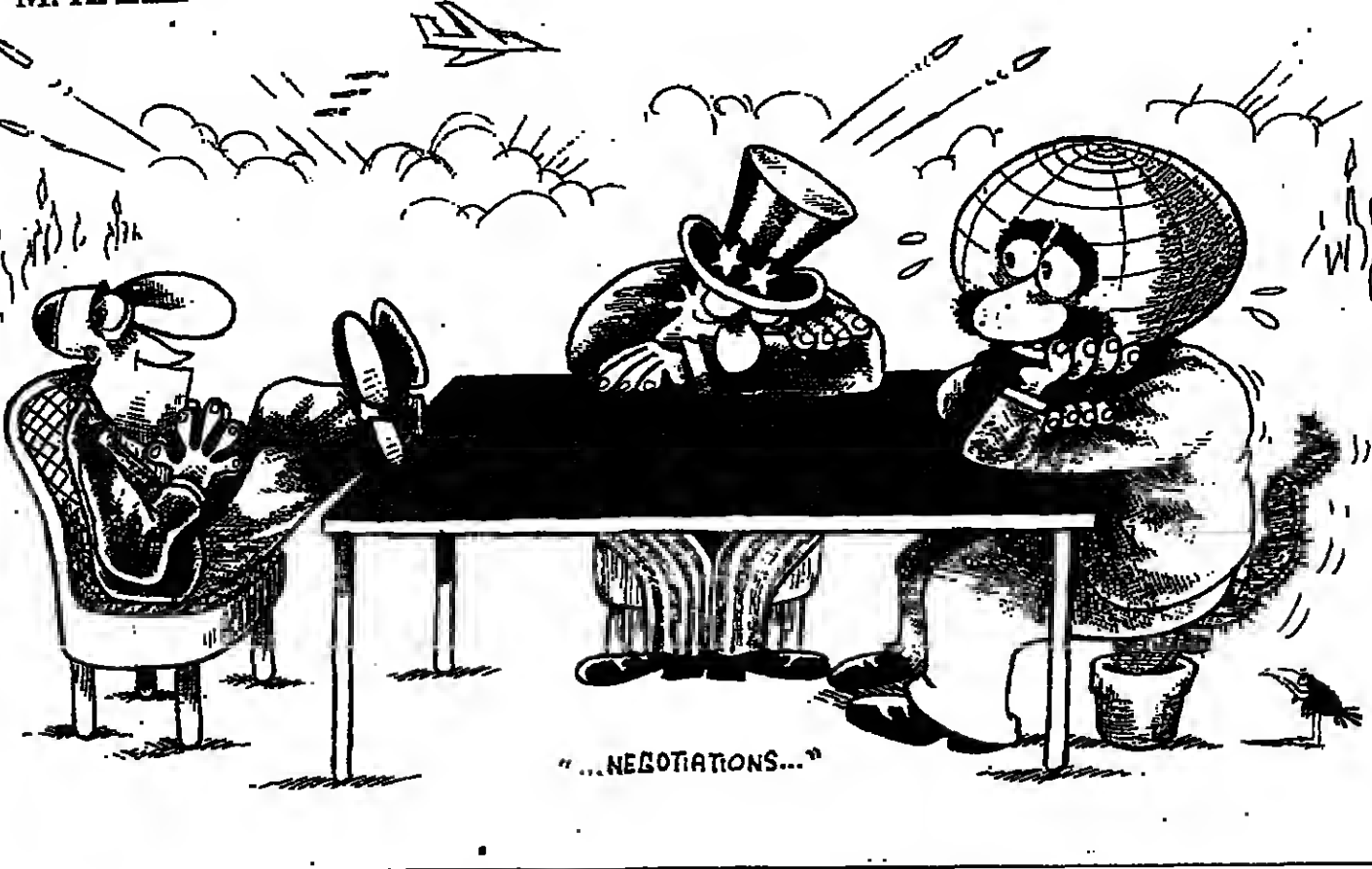
Neither the U.S. nor the collective nations of the world can put a quick end to global problems. Certainly not through the use of arms. What the U.N. and the superpowers should be doing is talking to all parties wherever conflicts exist, finding these conflicts' real causes and then addressing them in a just manner. Something has gone wrong in the treatment of the Somali question. What is urgently needed is an evaluation of the whole process of U.N. intervention in Somalia first and worldwide afterwards. A U.N. failure in Somalia will be a bad omen for all similar endeavours — and there are many hot spots around the world that require the U.N.'s helping hand. Order in the new world needs more solid foundations than what is currently being laid in Somalia.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

SAWT AL SHAAB praised the Jordanian-Palestinian leaderships for setting up sub-committees that can coordinate matters between the two sides and pave the way for a collective action at all levels. The Jordanians and the Palestinians are waging a battle for peace aimed at restoring the usurped Arab lands and the holy places and enabling the Palestinians to regain their rights on their soil, said the paper. For this purpose, said the paper, the two sides have no alternative but to embark on full cooperation, first regarding the water, borders, security and other matters and then at the political level. These sub-committees which are also discussing legal, economic and other issues are actually paving the ground for a solid and healthy relationship and a successful unity between the two sides in the future, added the paper. The formation of these sub-committees was a step in the right direction and it clearly manifests the true desire on the part of the two sides to embark on firm steps leading to a progressive future, continued the daily. No relationship solely based on sentiments can achieve success and it is imperative on the two sides, which share a common destiny and have the same goals, to come together and coordinate the essential steps for their united action and unity of ranks, the paper added. It said that such a move can only lend further support to the peace process and bolster the Arab negotiating stand.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily criticised a decision taken by the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) to send 18,000 troops to Bosnia-Herzegovina. The decision by the OIC foreign ministers can be interpreted in two ways, but neither one is favourable to the cause of the Bosnian Muslim people, said Tareq Masarwen. First, one can interpret the decision as a way of saving the Muslim nations the blame for failing so far to come to the help of the Muslim people of Bosnia. But such a force can by no means deter the enemy from pursuing their aggression, said the writer. He said that a second interpretation is that the move was an unfortunate one which would give the Croats and the Serbs the pretext to sue their war on the Bosnian people who are supposedly helped by 18,000 Muslim troops. It was indeed shameful for the OIC ministers to take such a decision, and it would have been better and more honourable for them to admit defeat and not subjugation to the U.S.-Western alliance which is imposing its domination on the Bosnian nation, added the writer. He said that the OIC decision was tantamount to justifying the aggression on the Bosnian population.

M. KAHIL



Israel

The long farce flounders

By Haim Baram

WEST JERUSALEM — Perhaps six months too late, the Palestinians have returned to their senses and begun to behave like a relevant player in the Arab-Israeli conflict and the seemingly endless peace negotiations. The Madrid process has perhaps outlived its usefulness, most illusions have been dispelled and even the pale dawn of the Rabin-Meretz government has been exposed, to be justifiably discarded by most Palestinians.

The greatest illusion of all, the credibility of the Clinton administration, is rapidly fading too. After the latest aggressions against Baghdad, and the curious dispatch of two obvious Zionist officials, Dennis Ross and especially Martin Indyk, to the region, Palestinian supporters of the peace process have been rendered impotent and almost speechless.

There is nothing wrong in being a Zionist, if one represents, officially and openly, the state of Israel. But an honest broker should at least try to appear impartial. Mr. Clinton and even Secretary of State Warren Christopher seem to choose their aides from a narrow and tendentious pool provided by AIPAC. It used to be more subtle in the not so distant past. But now, in the post-Baker era, the administration conducts its business clumsily; injustice is not only done, it is also seen to be done.

Even Faisal Hussein and Hanan Ashrawi seem to have had enough. On July 4, the Israeli daily Hadashot reported that Mr. Hussein had asked the U.S. secretary of state to withdraw the "unofficial" document it submitted on June 30. The unfortunate paper failed to meet the Palestinians' minimal requirement of East Jerusalem — and fell short of defining the American position on the future of the occupied territories. This is a clear retreat from the traditional U.S. stance, which has always purported to oppose Israeli expansionism, despite the fact that it persisted in paying for it.

Now, for the first time, the U.S. seems to have adopted the Israeli position. It insists on dealing with "autonomy" while leaving the controversial issues of Jerusalem and the boundaries of any future Palestinian entity to discussion in the vague future.

Such a position does not serve the real interests of the Israeli people, let alone the Palestinians, since it undercuts the moderate wing of the PLO and brings leaders like Mr. Hussein and even Yasser Arafat into disrepute. Prime Minister Rabin obviously took heart from the new American gestures. During a visit to Paris on July 2-4 he demonstrated renewed confidence and even panache. He devoted his speeches and several interviews to the "Islamic threat" but enhanced the fundamentalists' position by reiterating his refusal to negotiate with Mr. Arafat and insisting on excluding the fate of Jerusalem from the peace process.

Jerusalem the litmus

The Jerusalem issue has become the real demarcation line between the Israeli hawks and the authentic peace camp. Even the hitherto pro-Rabin writer, Amos Kanan, wrote in Yediot Aharanot on July 2 that without a negotiated compromise on Jerusalem all talk about the peace process is idle and empty. The newly established Peace Bloc, led by veteran peace campaigners like Uri Avneri, Matti Peled and Binjamin Cohen, decided to publicly demonstrate for the redimensioning of the city.

Such voices were heard even in Meretz, whose official but powerless leader, Shulamit Aloni warned Mr. Rabin on July 3 that it would leave his already shaky coalition unless there was a real "breakthrough" on the peace process. She hinted that some solution acceptable to the Arabs should be found to the Jerusalem problem. Ms. Aloni was at once repudiated by her Meretz colleagues. The remaining three Meretz ministers, Yossi Sarid, Yair Tshaban and especially Amos Rubinstein, defended the government, pledged their loyalty to Mr. Rabin and blamed the Palestinians for their untimely stubbornness. "If Arafat wants us to discuss Jerusalem now, it means that he does not want the peace process to succeed," claimed Mr. Rubinstein.

As long as the U.S. aids and abets the traditional Israeli policies of delay and avoiding the real issues, nothing of importance will happen. Many Israelis sincerely believe they can have both an enlarged Greater Jerusalem and peace. The renewed public debate brings us back to 1971 and Golda Meir. For the first time since the 1973 war, the Labour mainstream is counting on the old "territorial compromise" creed being applied again in earnest. Palestinian weakness and American callousness have together brought expansionism once again to the centre of the Israeli political area. This development is doubly distressing, because the Israeli public is more prepared for real territorial concessions than ever before.

On July 5 Israel was startled by Warren Christopher's announcement that the U.S. may withdraw from the peace process unless some progress is achieved. The secretary of state added that President Clinton has may other important things to do. Ms. Aloni ran the story alongside a prominent box reporting Israeli diplomatic circles who claimed that relations with the U.S. had never been so good — Middle East International.

Opportunity to move forward should not pass us by

By Talal Shair

KING HUSSEIN held a frank and open discussion on July 4 with members of the Upper House of Parliament anticipating elections later this year. To the surprise of most, the session was broadcast in full on television that evening and twice more in the same week. A fresh mood has descended upon Jordan since the King's return from Washington where he was warmly received by the American administration and Congress. Ever since the Gulf war, disarray, confusion and malaise had marred Jordanian society and politics in a manner which was clearly epitomised in local print journalism. Pick up a newspaper on a fine day and you are bound to read a negative article chastising this or that. Recently, a rejuvenated sense of direction and purpose have prevailed despite major obstacles in the face of peace negotiations, stagnant relations with some Arab countries and financial hardship as structural transformation of the economy gradually evolves.

Members of the Upper House, wise men of the land, expressed opinions and commented on a variety of issues seminal for the foreseeable future. The King, alert and in full command, resembling a distinguished professor leading a seminar, listened, interacted, corrected, and even had time to toss in a joke or two. Parliamentary elections expected most probably in November, and in particular a law governing those elections, dominated the setting. In its existing form, the law divides Jordan into twenty odd electoral districts, each of which has from a minimum of two to a maximum of nine representatives, depending on its demographic structure. In any case a citizen has the right to vote for all representatives of the district in which he/she is registered. The proposed change in the law is to allocate to each person the right to vote for only one representative, regardless of district — more popularly known as the "one-person one-vote" principle. Never mind that it is a reasonable proposition which is applied to most democratic systems, it has nevertheless caused somewhat of an uproar.

Arguments in favour of change are fairly unshakeable, two of which are the most compelling. First, the constitutional argument: How is it that one citizen may choose two representatives while another has the added privilege of, say, choosing six representatives, by virtue of registering in a different district, when both are supposed to enjoy equal rights and opportunities under the Constitution? Here is an obvious contradiction which needs to be rectified. Either divide the country into demographically equal districts — impossible in light of urban concentration, tribal distribution and geographic spread — or simply impose the "one-person one-vote" principle.

Then there is the practical, philosophical argument. Consider a district with eight representatives, where an average of ten candidates contest each available seat — reliable projections substantiate this figure as a minimum. Thus a citizen is asked to choose, out of eighty candidates, eight who best represent his and the country's interests. Placing such demands on voting citizens is impractical and defeats the goals for an "educated" vote, for it is indeed difficult enough to settle on just one candidate. It is every Jordanian's responsibility to base his or her decision on a careful and educated assessment of each candidate and that should be consistently encouraged. Arguing otherwise is plainly farcical.

Those opposing the "one-person one-vote" principle base their argument on historical precedent. The present law has been tested and works, so why alter it? Others have learnt to exploit the law to their own advantage and are threatened by the inevitable uncertainty which accompanies change. Jordanian society is undoubtedly conservative yet would surely not stand against improvement. And if the new law promises to be closer to the spirit of the Constitution and provides a body of parliamentarians more representative of society, then wouldn't Jordanians embrace it with no reservations? They certainly will.

A positive mood has truly descended upon Jordan and is attributed to a unique relationship between the people and their leader. A relationship that is open and frank, kind yet firm, it has never had to rely on intermediaries. Only when the regressive views of a minority are left unmatched, to cynicism and despair grow. A Parliament which more genuinely represents its constituents and promotes the interests of the country as a matter of priority will contribute substantially to a fair and just outcome of peace negotiations and will ease the strains of present economic difficulties. I believe the courage and commitment to move forward are there; how disappointing it would be to see this opportunity pass us by.

Talal Shair is an engineer with Dar Al Handasah Engineering Firm. He contributed the above article to the Jordan Times.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

No peace is feasible without granting rights to Palestinians; only thirty per cent of eligible voters register so far

Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

In the past week, the Arabic daily newspapers in Jordan tackled the ongoing Jordanian-Palestinian coordination of future ties, the Middle East issue in the wake of the failing 10th round of talks and the visit to the area by a U.S. Peace negotiator, Arab and international affairs in addition to domestic matters.

Al Dustour daily hailed the coordination between the Palestinian and Jordanian leaderships as a major step in the right direction, in implementation of directives by His Majesty King Hussein and President Yasser Arafat. The paper said that the two sides have a duty to coordinate their steps way before launching any kind of joint action towards their future and towards the peace process.

Al Dustour columnist Mazen Hammad commented on the same theme by stressing that coordination between the two sides was a natural response to Israel's intransigence and the biased American stand towards the Jewish state and its practices in the occupied Arab lands.

The writer said that in the absence of a fair mediator in the Arab-Israeli dispute, it was natural for the Jordanians and the Palestinians to take the initiative and embark on steps that would secure their united stand vis-a-vis the talks.

He said that should the Clinton administration pursue its present stand, the whole process is bound to collapse, giving way to further violence and despair.

Commenting on the Jordanian-Palestinian talks, a

columnist in Sawt Al Shaab daily said that it is too early to contemplate a confederation between the Jordanians and the Palestinians.

Salameh Ekour said it is regrettable to say that those now seeking a confederation with Jordan were the same people who had fought hard at the regional and pan-Arab levels to achieve a severance of administrative relations between the East and the West Banks of Jordan.

Jordan was forced to sever ties with the West Bank under pressure, and that step sabotaged the strongest unity that ever happened between two Arab people, he added.

Al Dustour and Sawt Al Shaab dailies commented on current Israeli preparations for a new aggression on Lebanon. Reports persist about massing of Israeli troops along the border with Lebanon in preparation for such an aggression which comes in the wake of an unsuccessful tour made by U.S. envoy Dennis Ross, said Al Dustour.

Israel is not accusing itself for the violence in South Lebanon, which it had been occupying for so long in defiance of the United Nations. It is accusing the Lebanese people for trying to liberate their country, said the daily.

Sawt Al Shaab echoed the same view, noting that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and his government consider the Lebanese territory as an Israeli possession. The paper said that should the attack come, the peace process would be dealt a hard blow.

The Palestine question will remain a central Arab issue since 60 per cent of the Jews living in Palestine had come from Arab countries, said Taher Al Udwan, a columnist in Al Dustour.

The writer said that had the Arabs prevented the Jews from going to Israel, the Arab Nation would not be facing the present difficulties and conflicts with the Zionists. The Arab countries which contributed to the creation of the Jewish state ought to take steps now to help Palestinians regain their homeland, he demanded.

Commenting on the American document presented to the Palestinians, and the recent tour of the Middle East region by Dennis Ross, Saleh Al Qalal said Washington ought to realise that Palestinians can by no means accept the document, even after it had been amended, because of the United States' total bias towards Israel.

The writer said that no peace could be feasible or can last unless the rights of the Palestinians have been granted and taken into consideration. The U.S. administration should also realise that no Arab party can ignore the Palestinians and conduct deals with Israel and the United States behind their backs, he added.

Walid Abu Baker, a columnist in Al Dustour, said that the United States is contemplating baiting the Palestinians to make them give the Israelis more concessions. The writer said that the U.S. thinks that by reopening its dialogue with the PLO, it would get more of these con-

cessions, as happened before. But the writer added that the Palestinians, who have rejected the American document, are showing the world that no temptation could ever lure them away from their rights and their land.

A columnist in Al Ra'i described the present divisions within the PLO leadership and demanded that prominent Palestinian personalities inside and outside the occupied lands interfere and put matters right.

Mahmoud Al Rimawi said everyone realises that the PLO leadership is facing all forms of pressures and challenges in the course of attaining a peaceful settlement, but all efforts inside and outside the occupied lands must rally behind the Palestinian people's ongoing endeavours to regain their rights and achieve an end to occupation.

He said that a democratic and collective leadership is now wanted more than any time in the past to ensure a right decision at the right moment.

Hamadeh Faraaneh, another columnist in Al Dustour, said that the PLO leadership is facing a political, financial and economic siege and its resources are being depleted under pressure from Arab and foreign countries.

He said that the siege and the pressure are meant as a means to force the PLO to accept humiliating defeat and offer more concessions to Israel at the negotiating table. Regardless of the difficulties and the ongoing siege imposed on Jordan and the Palestinian people at Aqaba, the Palesti-

nians and the Jordanians are bound to withstand the challenge and the pressure and retain their steadfastness at all cost, rather than give up one iota of their rights to Jerusalem or other parts of the Arab homeland.

Continued siege on Aqaba is tackled by Ahmad Dabbas in Sawt Al Shaab. The writer said that despite Jordan's protests to the United States, against the harassment of international shipping, the siege continues and the Jordanian people suffer. The blockade on Aqaba is a flagrant aggression by the United States against the Jordanian people, something that should be confronted by all means, said the writer. He added that public sectors should rise and take collective action against this American arrogance and should not bury their heads in the sand.

Only 31 per cent of those eligible to vote in the coming elections have registered so far, said Taher Al Udwan in Al Dustour.

The writer said that 300,000 people failed to register their names for voting in 1989 and the figure is augmented this year with the names of those who came of election age and are considered eligible to cast ballots. The writer said that further government facilities should be forthcoming soon to encourage the people to register for voting.

Due to the lack of proper facilities helping people to register for the elections, only very few have turned out at the registration offices, said

Ahmad Dabbas in Sawt Al Shaab. The writer said that numerous obstacles stand in the way of those trying to register or to change their constituencies, making the registration process complicated. The writer said that the government ought to come up with clear instructions that would make it easy for the registration offices and the public to carry out their national duty.

A guest columnist in Al Ra'i focused attention on a host of problems facing the education sector in Jordan. Ahlam Al Murr said that among the problems more and more young men and women are showing interest in obtaining higher education, only to find themselves jobless after finishing their studies.

The writer said that teachers have very low salaries, which of course reflect negatively on their performance. The writer added that should the present trend continue, the education sector in Jordan will be facing a great danger, with the young graduates being the main victims.

Mohammad Ibrahim Daoud, a columnist in Al Dustour, praised the minister of education for embarking on the first step towards imposing the Ministry of Education's rules on the private schools, concerning school fees. The writer referred to a recent meeting between the school administrators, private school teachers and the minister of education when it was announced that the ministry should approve increases in the school fees.

Eating bugs is good for your heart

By Anton Ferreira
Reuter

JOHANNESBURG — Jan Crafford popped a locust into his mouth and extolled the virtues of the insect tightly fried in olive oil with just a hint of crushed garlic. "The fats in insects are polyunsaturated," he said. "Zero cholesterol. No danger for people with heart problems."

Across the crowded room, Marcus Byrne made a dive for the last of the toasted termites.

The occasion was a cocktail party for delegates to a meeting of the South African Entomological Society. The snacks, appropriately, were four kinds of insects.

Latecomers missed out on the apparently irresistible stinkbugs and termites, but only small demerits were in the piles of locusts and mopani worms.

"Just pop the heads off like this," an insect expert explained, expertly decapitating a mopani worm before placing it in his mouth.

"With the locusts, you just eat the abdomen. The wings and thorax are a bit tough and get stuck in your teeth."

As the evening wore on, and with regular cleansing of the palate with beer, the mopani worms took on the addictive properties of peanuts. Especially after being dipped in sour cream.

Unfortunately the locust bellies tasted like locust bellies throughout the evening.

"The bigger locusts are better," Mr. Byrne said. "But they seem to have all been eaten. My favourite way of cooking them is with garlic butter and peri peri sauce."

Mr. Byrne, mastermind behind the bug banquet, said the serious message was to educate people on the importance of insects.

"They are competitors for our food, they pollinate crops, they carry disease, and they are themselves an important food source."

His only fear was that some of the cocktail snacks might have been collected after succumbing to pesticide sprays.

"If half the guests here tonight collapse when they get home, I'll be in real trouble."

Mopani worms, which mutate into emperor moths if not fried first, are widely eaten by Africa's peasant communities, usually after being dried.

"Stinkbugs are a delicacy in Natal," said Mr. Crafford. "The chemical which gives them their name is quite harmless and actually tastes like coriander."

"Some black communities obtain 80 per cent of their protein from insects."

Mr. Crafford is researching the role of insects in the diet and folk lore of the Venda tribe in northern South Africa.

"It's a pity there's a psychological resistance to eating insects," said Mr. Crafford, who is gathering material for a South African gourmet insect cook book. "In fact they're closely related to prawns and crayfish."

His favourite insect dish is mopani worms with tomato and onion sauce.

Even at an entomologists' cocktail party, conversation can flag. In an emergency, mention cow dung.

"Why, I specialise in cow and horse dung," said Karin Camerik, a Dutch mite expert, her face lighting up.

The mites she studies — most of them invisible to the naked eye — breed furiously in cow pats.

"Cow pats are a much more favourable habitat than horse dung, because they form a crust which retains moisture inside. Horse dung dries too quickly."

Australia has learned the hard way that cow pats make wonderful homes for flies.

None of Australia's indigenous bugs evolved to cope with either cow pats or flies, with the result that Australians have to jangle corks from their hat brims to keep the fly plague out of their faces.

Entomologists have come to the rescue, exporting heavy duty African dung beetles to Australia to break up the cow pats.

Ms. Camerik herself is trying to unlock the secrets of the cow dung mite life cycle so these tiny creatures, which parasitise fly eggs, can be unleashed in Australia.

"We can't get the mites to reproduce in the laboratory," she complained.

A key step in mite sexuality is development of a giant hook on its face which it digs into a fly so it can hitch a ride from one life-giving island of dung to another.

According to Mr. Crafford, dung beetles and flies are not among the insects one would want to eat.

"There are only five kinds of insects that are widely eaten," he said. "The others might not be actually toxic, but they taste awful."

Illegals: daring perils of the border for a job

Susana Hayward

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
NUEVO LAREDO, Mexico — Six naked men, their belongings in plastic bags, plunged into the muddy Rio Grande and swam frantically against the current to the United States.

They were among the dozens of Mexicans who cross the river illegally each day hoping to find jobs in America. As the men swam from Nuevo Laredo, Mexico to Laredo, Texas, television cameras atop the Royce Hotel on the U.S. side relayed their pictures to the Laredo headquarters of the U.S. border patrol.

The border patrol's struggle to stop the illegal settlers has been going on for years. But recently, human rights groups have accused its officers of unnecessary brutality.

In May, America's Watch said "beatings" and other forms of mistreatment are common during the arrest and detention of undocumented immigrants. Last year, Amnesty International accused the border patrol of "serious and systematic" abuse of illegal immigrants.

President Carlos Salinas de Gortari and the Mexican government's National Commission on Human Rights also have criticised actions of the U.S. border patrol, which denies any systematic use of unnecessary force.

Along the Rio Grande, the tales of would-be immigrants vary widely, from claims that the complaints are correct to stories of decent treatment by border patrol officers.

"They humiliate us, call us wetbacks," Rolando Sanchez said, but added: "I am not going to speak badly of all of them because not all are bad."

A man who asked to be identified only as Jorge said: "They punch us in the stomach. They don't respect us."

Only a few of more than 30 illegal aliens interviewed in Laredo said they were mistreated.

"If you run from them when they try to stop you, they won't mistreat you, but they will be harder on you," said Martinez Moreno, 26. "They handcuff you and shove you."

America's Watch attributed

most abuses to "the high level of frustration experienced" by agents. It said they vent it by "assaulting immigrants who attempt to flee from agents."

Each year, the border patrol's 4,000 officers catch about a million illegal immigrants trying to cross the 3,219-kilometre frontier with Mexico.

Some estimate they get one in three, others one in 10. No one knows for sure. Most illegals cross back and forth many times, and most run when spotted.

"If they try to run from us, we are firm with them," said Juan Rodriguez, who supervises 20 border patrol agents. "I have never seen anybody abused, other than telling someone to stop, to sit down. That we hit them, it's a myth."

Sanchez has crossed the border from the hills of Baja California, through the Sonoran Desert to Arizona and across the Rio Grande to Texas, and has been

caught only four times since 1986. Of all the "migras," as Mexicans call immigration officials, he said the nicest are in Laredo.

Sanchez said an agent in El Paso once hit him in the stomach with a billy club because he had continued running when told to stop.

The America's Watch report did not include Laredo. Most of the cases cited took place at the San Ysidro crossing in California, in El Paso and at Nogales, Arizona.

"In the mind of the alien, he's not doing anything wrong," said Stephen Kean, spokesman for the Border Patrol at San Ysidro. "So you have a situation in which agents are trying to enforce the law and suddenly the alien thinks he's being treated like a criminal and physically abused."

"It's a conflict of cultures, if you will. The vast majority of agents are doing their job in a professional way."

He said most of the trouble

starts when someone resists arrest by "swinging, kicking and punching."

About 70,000 illegal aliens are caught each year in Laredo, far fewer than the 1,500 a day in the San Ysidro-San Diego area.

"We do preach to agents at the field to enforce the law and they do it in a humanitarian way," said Guadalupe Aguirre, assistant chief patrol agent at Laredo.

"We always have some reports of abuse. Some people refuse to get arrested. Some agents get a little hostile, so you have to use whatever tools available."

Complaints are inevitable because no other law enforcement agency makes as many arrests as the border patrol, Duke Austin, spokesman for Immigration and Naturalisation Service, said by telephone from Washington.

"I challenge anyone to come up with a better record than us," he said. "It's upsetting and insulting to us as an agency that anyone would suggest we condone or endorse abusive behaviour."

A thicket of bamboo and brush right below a Laredo shopping mall serves as cover for illegals on the U.S. bank of the Rio Grande. Swimmers use it to put on their clothes.

Some have a "coyote," or paid smuggler, who will drive them to another city, but most hop the Missouri Pacific freight train that makes the 233-kilometre run from Laredo north to San Antonio.

Many who try to cross the Rio Grande drown because they cannot swim well enough or at all. Border patrol agents report at least two drownings a month in the Laredo area.

Illegals who are caught sign statements of voluntary deportation and promise not to return, but most try again.

Some say their worst fear is being caught in Mexico. Although crossing the border does not violate Mexican law, they say the Mexican police take their money and often torture them for confessions that they are either "coyotes" or drug smugglers.

"Mexican police are beasts," Sanchez said. "I'd much rather get caught by the Americans."

Many agents feel sorry for aliens

LAREDO, Texas (AP) — Juan Rodriguez can't get the woman with the rosary in her mouth out of his mind.

Most nights, the U.S. border patrol agent speeds from one end of Laredo to the other, trying to catch Mexicans who cross the Rio Grande illegally.

Recently, Rodriguez was shining his flashlight at the speeding Missouri Pacific freight train when he saw a woman clinging to the train, terror in her eyes, a rosary in her mouth.

"I'm haunted by it," he said. "I don't know if she's alive. She could be lying there on the tracks, dead, and no one would know."

Rodriguez, 38, is beginning to feel burned out after 17 years of trying to catch illegal aliens who swim the river and hop the train. He has seen too many drownings, too many illegal immigrants crippled or killed by train accidents.

"Sometimes I just want to quit," he said. "This job affects a lot of agents. We see a lot of pain. Our job is to catch them, but we don't wish them any bad luck." said Abel Hinojosa, another agent. "I have never seen anyone hit an illegal alien in five years. Not here."

"We get accused of it sometimes, and sometimes we have to be forceful," he said. "Our job is to protect Americans from these people who are taking jobs. If we didn't have the border patrol, they would mess up the job market. Unemployment would be a lot greater."

Most studies of illegal immigration studies indicate the Mexicans take jobs Americans don't want.

"I grew up in Argentina, in Chile; I travelled all over South America," said Agent Bennett Elliott. "So I really feel for the people. My job is to catch them, but I always feel sorry for them."

West Bank land prices signal hope

By Karin Laab
The Associated Press

NABLUS, Occupied West Bank — Land prices have jumped fourfold and apartment prices doubled within a year in the West Bank's largest Arab city.

In the nearby Jewish settlement of Ariel, the volume of home sales has dropped by 90 per cent and housing by 20 per cent.

The real estate market — a barometer of long-term expectations — is signaling that many Palestinians and Israelis believe the Mideast peace talks will eventually produce a land-for-peace deal. It stands in sharp contrast with the rhetoric of Israeli and Arab politicians who complain of deadlock in the Washington talks.

"I'm very optimistic about the situation and so is everybody else in the territories," said Nablus gold dealer Wajdi Kamhawi.

Mr. Kamhawi is building a \$1.5 million, 10-story office and shopping complex on a plot that has increased fivefold in value.

Among the 120,000 Jewish settlers, "there is a lot of anxiety," said Bob Lang, spokesman for the Jewish settlement movement Eumunim.

"People are wondering whether they should put their lives, hopes and savings into a community the government has already given up on," he said.

Only two years earlier, during the settlement construction drive of Israel's previous hard-line Likud government, hundreds of Israelis were buying West Bank homes, many lured by govern-

ment tax and mortgage breaks. "Nobody thought the territories would be returned. Today, people are accepting this fact and they know they don't have a choice," said sociologist Osnat Toledano.

He has spoken to scores of settlers who want to sell their homes.

The changing climate has encouraged Palestinians in the West Bank and to a lesser extent in the Gaza Strip to renovate shops, open factories, buy land and build apartments.

"It's all connected to politics," said Nablus land dealer Yousef Baba. "When investors hear about a political solution, they go crazy and are willing to pay any amount."

Mr. Baba said he bought land in Nablus' Raffidiyeh district in February 1992 for \$138 a square metre and sold it a year later for \$650. Prices for unfinished apartments — shells without the final touches — rose from \$17,400 to \$29,000 in a year.

In the past 18 months, Israel has issued 255 permits for new businesses in the West Bank — compared to 16 in 1988-89.

"People can see there is hope at the end of the tunnel," said Attorney Hussam Attirch of Nablus, who in the past six months has been hired by 16 investors who want Israeli business permits.

Palestinian economist Samir Hazboun is trying to bring 800 wealthy diaspora Palestinians to the occupied lands to scout business opportunities.

In the Jewish settlements, the reversal of fortunes began with

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's decision to scrap tax breaks, grants and easy loans for businesses and home buyers there and shift investment to Israel.

Housing Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer says 5,000 apartments stand vacant in settlements outside the Jerusalem area.

In Ariel, a Jewish settlement of 12,000 people, home sales dropped 90 per cent in the first six months of this year, said Ms. Toledano, who collected data on home sales in most West Bank

settlements for the real estate surveyor Gemolab Nadlan.

A duplex in Ariel that sold for \$1,156 a square metre in 1991 now goes for \$880, a drop of 23 per cent, she said.

Priests feel because thousands of settlers are trying to sell and there are few buyers, she said. Prices dropped only slightly in some settlements close to Israel and even rose in those ringing Jerusalem because of expectations that Israel will eventually annex these areas.

Can U.N. peacekeepers deal with civil strife?

By Charles Aldinger
Reuter

WASHINGTON — The hard-pressed U.N. peacekeeping mission in Somalia, a rutted military ground now strewn with bodies, has raised major questions about the world body's ability to deal with civil strife and anarchy.

From the Vaocan to the Pentagon to U.N. headquarters in New York, cries of blame and protest are flying over the growing violence in a small African nation that seemed on track to being fed and pacified only a few months ago.

The world, analysts say, is finding that military peacekeeping can be far from peaceful and that noble intentions often leave frustrated international troops with a police whistle in one hand and a bloody club in the other.

"The question is, does the world community have the stomach for the 'collateral damage' that is going on in Somalia?" Asked Professor William Zartman, an expert on Africa and conflict resolution at Johns Hopkins University.

"This is, no doubt, a watershed for United Nations' peacekeeping efforts," added Andrew Goldberg of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies.

Doubts about the U.N. capacity to handle such challenges grew after an attack Monday on the command cen-

tre of Somali warlord Mohammad Farah Aided in Mogadishu that killed over a dozen Somalis. Four foreign journalists were beaten and slotted to death by mobs in a backlash that followed.

It was the latest in a series of deadly tit-for-tat battles between General Aided's forces and blue-helmeted U.N. troops, sent in last spring to take over from U.S.-led forces the job of maintaining order so that humanitarian groups could keep feeding starving Somalia.

But led by Italy and the Organisation of African Unity, a growing number of countries and groups called this week for a reassessment of the U.N. military mission in Somalia and how it might be accomplished without increasing bloodshed.

On Tuesday, Italy asked the United Nations to move the Italian troop contingent out of Mogadishu unless agreement could be reached on the operation of the U.N. mission in the Somali capital, Foreign Minister Beniamino Andreatta said.

The Pentagon has stressed repeatedly that U.S. forces remain in Mogadishu are essentially under U.N. control. But U.S. defence officials assert privately that troops from different countries such as Italy and Pakistan and now following political dictates from back home.

Major American involvement was to have ended last

spring when most of the U.S. troops sent in last December were replaced by U.N. peacekeepers — but in the last month the United States appears to have taken on the role of hired gun, trying to keep order by occasional fierce displays of force.

In June U.N. forces led by U.S. warplanes pounded Aided strongholds in Mogadishu after Pakistani U.N. troops were killed in an ambush blamed Gen. Aided. And Monday it was U.S. Cobra helicopter gunships that blitzed the command centre.

The United States announced Tuesday it has moved a sea-going task force of 2,200 Marines away from Somalia and will begin withdrawing four AC-130 attack planes.

But Captain Michael Doubleday, a Pentagon spokesman, told reporters the movements did not signal any softening of Washington's support for a military crackdown against Gen. Aided.

And the U.N. envoy for Somalia, Retired U.S. Admiral Jonathan Howe, said there would be no easing of the crackdown despite criticism by government and relief agencies of the violence.

"I think appeasement is the wrong strategy when terrorism continues," Adm. Howe said. "We will respond to acts of terrorism. The city must be disarmed."

World community may act less after Bosnia, Somalia

By Nicholas Doughty
Reuter

BRUSSELS — Faced with the bitter lessons of Bosnia and Somalia, the world community may now be less inclined to intervene in crises unless it can be sure of achieving humanitarian or military aims quickly, analysts say.

The end of the cold war brought a wave of optimism that the United Nations, with renewed moral authority and freed from paralysing east-west divisions, could intervene in the name of saving lives and even to rebuild entire countries.

The U.N. operations in Bosnia and Somalia both set new precedents that strengthened those hopes.

Peacekeepers in the African country were given a mandate to restore order, not simply to monitor the situation, while NATO warplanes and U.N. troops are now preparing to defend Muslim safe areas from attack in Bosnia.

But, with both missions in serious trouble and criticised for poor organisation and lack of results, the mood among politicians and the public may change.

The potential costs — both to peacekeepers and to the local population — are becoming horribly clear.

"There is a feeling that the U.N. has overstepped itself," said Doctor Trevor Findlay, an expert on the United Nations and peacekeeping who works at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

"The U.N. is not the solution to all the problems in the world... The mood will change. We'll end up with a more balanced view where people realise intervention is not always right."

Diplomats in Brussels said it was likely that western nations would now be increasingly careful about committing troops to crises, especially where fighting is particularly fierce or where a country has collapsed into anarchy.

Operations with clearly-defined, achievable aims — such as the 1991 Gulf war to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait or the U.N. mission to hold elections in Cambodia — are still feasible.

"The trouble is that we haven't been clear enough on what we wanted to achieve in Bosnia and Somalia, we haven't really had a long-term strategy," said one diplomat. "There are already signs that the world is going to be a lot more careful in the future."

Italy has threatened to pull its troops out of the operation in Somalia unless the United Nations stops using force and reverts to a humanitarian mission.

Peace mediator Thorvald Stoltenberg has said the United Nations might have to withdraw from Bosnia if fighting escalates and relief supplies dwindle.

While Islamic countries have offered troops to defend Muslim safe areas, European nations are deeply reluctant to commit more to Bosnia if the United States has refused to send forces to Bosnia.

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China expects influx of Gulf Arab investment

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Wealthy Gulf Arab states have around \$600 million of investments in China but the figure will largely increase due to new incentives, a Chinese official was quoted as saying.

Hu Wen, commercial attaché at the Chinese embassy in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), said the investments by the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) were concentrated in construction, communication and industry.

"GCC investments have reached \$600 million since China began to adopt an openness policy in 1976," she told the UAE daily Al Khaleej. "We expect investment applications to rise dramatically in the next period. The current conditions in China are very suitable for investment after the incentives offered by the government to attract foreign investment."

She said such a policy attracted about \$35 billion in foreign investment in 1992, mainly from Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and the United States. The UAE also plans to invest around \$3 million, she added.

Chinese vice premier for trade, Li Lanqing, discussed economic cooperation and investment during his tour last week of Iran and GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the UAE.

He signed oil, trade and investment agreements with some GCC members, including two accords with the UAE to encourage joint projects.

Chinese embassy sources said GCC officials and businessmen planned visits to China to discuss investment opportunities while businessmen from there would come to the UAE to discuss investment in Dubai's Jebel Ali free trade zone, the largest in the Gulf.

Despite the increase, the GCC's investments in China remain a fraction of their assets in the West, estimated at more than \$350 billion. Two-way trade of \$1.4 billion is also much lower than the GCC's trade with the European Community and Japan of \$36 billion and \$35 billion.

Ms. Wen said China had 15 government and private ventures in the UAE in the industrial and oil services sectors but she did not mention their value.

She said the trade balance with the GCC was largely in favour of China but it would be redressed by Peking's decision to import oil directly from the region.

Agusta posts \$580m loss

ROME (AFP) — The Italian helicopter manufacturer Agusta made a loss of \$580 million in 1992 compared with a loss of \$182 million in 1991, company sources have said.

Agusta increased sales by 39 per cent to 937 billion lire (\$632 million).

The number of employees was reduced from 8,343 to 6,826.

Agusta, a subsidiary of the state holding company EFIM, has come under the wing of IRI-Finmeccanica.

The commissioner responsible for liquidating EFIM, Alberto Predieri, has asked that money which is owed, but which would be difficult to recover, should be written off to make the company more attractive to an eventual purchaser.

Mitsubishi motors news

Mr. Raijio Kuromizu, managing director and corporate general manager of the International Business at headquarters of Mitsubishi Motors Corporation-Tokyo gives his perspective "A View From The Top". So much happens in the world of Mitsubishi Motors that it is sometimes rather difficult to see the wood for the trees. Certainly, we cover a wide range of topics, but it is also important to get overall picture.

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We are moving from a manufacturing and engineering-oriented approach overseas towards a more market and customer-oriented approach. This is all part of getting closer to the customer.

Japan may this year record first invisible trade surplus in 23 years

TOKYO (AFP) — Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan Ltd. (LTCB) has forecast that Japan's rate of economic growth would remain weak this year while the country would post its first invisible trade surplus in 23 years.

The bank's economic outlook for 1993-94 also predicted that gross national product (GNP) would grow by 1.9 per cent in the current fiscal year, up from 0.8 per cent last year, before accelerating to three per cent next year.

Japan's invisible trade balance was forecast to swing from a deficit of \$4.8 billion to a surplus of \$1.9 billion this year, the first since 1970, and an even bigger surplus of \$4.5 billion next year.

For the past two decades, Japan has suffered deficits in its invisible trade account as it spends more on foreign services such as travel and transport than foreigners spend on Japanese services. The deficit has, however, shrunk rapidly in the past year

due to surging inflows of investment income from abroad.

The bank forecast that Japan's trade and current account surpluses would expand to new records this year before retreating next year. At the same time, the dollar was forecast to average 111 yen, down sharply from 125 yen last year, and strengthen further to an average of 108 yen next year.

The bank's forecast of 1.9 per cent GNP growth for this year is sharply below the Economic Planning Agency's official forecast of 3.3 per cent in December.

"Although increased public investment is gradually taking effect, the sluggish private demand that has restrained growth in the first half of the fiscal year will continue," the bank said.

"This will be a primary reason for the low rate of growth."

LTCB said fears of further economic decline had faded because asset deflation had "more or less" run its course while stimulatory measures announced by the government in the past year had started to take effect.

"Nonetheless, perceptions of the state of the economy have not improved due to such factors as the continuation of the slump in consumption which has been greater than anticipated, the rapid appreciation of the yen and the confusion in Japan's political situation," the bank said.

Turning to the fiscal year starting in April next year, LTCB said the economy's capacity for recovery would be limited due to several factors.

"Adjustments to excessive workers numbers will continue and public investment will start to be reduced in the second half of the fiscal year. In addition, exports will be held in check and conditions in the construction industry will remain sluggish," the bank pointed out.

"Over the course of the entire year, however, the rate of growth

in demand will increase as those adjustments in the economy progress and perceptions of the state of the economy gradually improve," it elaborated.

Japan's trade surplus is meanwhile expected to expand from a record \$136 billion to a new all-time high of \$152 billion this year before retreating to \$144 billion the following year.

The increase in the surplus reflects the impact of stronger yen inflating the dollar price of exports, which are forecast to climb from \$335 billion to \$359 billion to \$366 billion. Imports are expected to rise from \$199 billion to \$207 billion to \$222 billion.

The current account surplus, measuring trade in both goods and services, is predicted to grow from \$126 billion to \$149 billion this year, another new record, before retreating to \$145 billion next year.

IMF says Arab countries make progress in reforms

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuters

AMMAN — Arab countries implementing International Monetary Fund (IMF) reforms are now geared towards structural changes as financial policies are on track, a senior IMF official said Friday.

"The Arab countries' biggest challenge is not so much now in financial reform... in which some countries have made very considerable progress... but in structural economic reform," IMF Executive Director Abdul Shakour Shaalan told Reuters.

These included price liberalisation, reducing tariffs, opening economies to the outside world and removing state controls, he said.

Mr. Shaalan said Tunisia and Morocco, who embarked on IMF reforms a decade ago, had already succeeded in overcoming their fiscal problems.

"They have been taking money from the IMF over a decade. Now they have graduated, they do not need it. And we have very viable economies," he said.

Growth rates are high, budget deficits low, and inflation is no longer a problem.

Prior to reforms the two countries suffered from high budget deficits, relatively slow growth and high inflation, he said.

More recent programmes started by Egypt and Jordan had already begun achieving "remarkable" fiscal targets, he added.

"The \$16 billion of bank re-

serves in Egypt after the exchange rate was freed and appropriate policies pursued are unprecedented... I did not dream it would happen that fast," he pointed out. Their budget deficit was in excess of 20 per cent of GDP. This year it's expected to be 3.5 per cent. Quite an achievement.

IMF assisted programmes were now instrumental in moving more Arab states towards market-oriented economies, he said.

Some countries like Syria and Yemen, though not formally undertaking IMF reforms, were embarking on similar policies or getting the fund's advice, he said.

Mr. Shaalan said official creditors were also studying debt relief for heavily indebted countries in

the Middle East to make it easier for them to implement IMF assisted structural reforms.

"The overhang of debt is a deterrent to their reform programmes. In many of these countries there is a perception 'why have economic reforms which will just go to pay foreigners.' The trend is to grant debt relief... it's not new. But what is new is that coverage is more and terms are more favourable," he said.

Mr. Shaalan said the region could attain high levels of growth.

"The Middle East in the last decade has lagged in growth behind Asia and Latin America, but the potential is there. If it persists in structural reforms the region could flourish," he emphasised.

Bundesbahn, Reichsbahn to cut 90,000 jobs by '98

FRANKFURT (AP) — Carrying a huge and mounting debt, Germany's national railway has said it plans to cut 90,000 jobs by 1998.

The remaining 70,000 jobs are to be cut through normal retirements, and a planned early retirement offer to those over 55, similar to one announced by the Federal Post Office earlier last month.

That plan called for full benefits for early retirees, with lump sum severance pay of up to 8,000 marks (\$4,800), depending on position held.

Officials said the cuts are expected to reduce personnel costs about 25 per cent and that the overall plan should result in savings of about 650 million marks (\$394 million) annually.

largely to technical improvements made in outmoded Reichsbahn operations in east Germany since unification in 1990.

The united country's two railway systems, the Bundesbahn in western Germany and eastern Germany's Reichsbahn, have a combined total of about 390,000 employees, Bundesbahn spokeswoman Anfried Baier-Fuchs said.

Last year the two systems posted a record-high operating loss of 11 billion marks (about \$6.6 billion), driving the combined debt of the national railway to 70 billion marks (\$42 billion).

Railway officials said a surplus of some 20,000 employees are expected to be cut next year, due

Roche forecasts profits rise on sales increase

BASEL, Switzerland (AFP) — The Swiss chemicals group Roche expects profits to rise sharply this year, the company has said.

It reported that sales in the first half had risen by eight per cent.

Sales in the first six months rose to 7.15 billion Swiss francs (\$4.67 billion) from 6.62 billion francs in the same period of last year.

The company said that "a new considerable increase in group profits" was to be expected in the absence of "extraordinary events particularly in the monetary field."

In terms of local currencies, sales rose by 10 per cent.

Sales in the pharmaceuticals sector rose by 12 per cent in Swiss francs to 3.898 billion francs from

3.487 billion francs in 1992. In local currencies sales rose by 14 per cent.

The performance by the pharmaceuticals division was the biggest factor in the sales outcome.

Sales of vitamins and of other specific chemical products rose by two per cent to 1.594 billion francs and by three per cent in local currencies.

Sales of products used for diagnostics rose by eight per cent in Swiss francs to 867 million francs; and by nine per cent in local currencies.

Sales of perfumes rose by four per cent in Swiss francs to 749 million francs and by five per cent in local currencies.

EBRD's Attali quits after critical report

LONDON (R) — The head of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) announced his sudden departure on Friday after a sharply critical report on his flamboyant management style and the bank's lavish headquarters.

The EBRD said Jacques Attali, who gave notice to quit last month amid a furor over the bank spending more on helping eastern Europe, had decided to step down immediately rather than wait for a successor to be chosen.

The swift exit came within hours of the publication of an auditors' report which spoke of lax spending controls at the two-year-old bank and faulted Mr. Attali for his personal expenses, accusing him of breaking the bank's own code of conduct.

The French-born son of a Jewish businessman, he resigned in June after a barrage of criticism in the British press, saying the attacks had begun to undermine the work of the bank set up to help rebuild the economies of eastern Europe.

The report recommended tightening spending procedures and said the EBRD board of directors should ensure a single committee had responsibility for monitoring budgets.

The auditors' committee said it was particularly concerned about how the architect of the headquarters was appointed and that there was no competitive tendering in booking jets.

In its report, the audit committee slammed in particular Mr. Attali's frequent use of private planes, his late repayment of bank expenditure on personal items and his "non-bank sources of remunerations" in breach of the bank's code of conduct.

According to a study prepared

for the bank by accountants Coopers and Lybrand, the total cost of fitting out the EBRD's headquarters was £66 million (\$100 million), or more than £10 million over its agreed budget.

The audit committee said it was "particularly concerned that there were areas of the fit-out where value for money was not the primary consideration," giving as an example the changing of the marble in the entrance hall and the installation of sophisticated suspended ceilings.

"Substantial cost savings could have been achieved if there had been better planning and control," the committee said.

The committee also accused Mr. Attali of having been "influential in the selection of architects for the fitting out of the building rented by the EBRD."

The reports said that since 1991, the bank had used private planes of 57 occasions at a total cost of £1.4 million, stressing that Mr. Attali had ordered "the majority" of these special flights.

The committee denounced the use of the private planes, in place of scheduled airlines, as "inappropriate."

The committee noted that the 48 of the 57 flights were with one charter company, with no competitive tendering process for its selection.

The late repayment of private credit card expenditure and the difficulties in establishing the facts concerning private flights are particularly worrying, the committee said.

Mr. Attali was reported last month to have been paid to deliver a number of speeches in Japan. He said at the time that the money had been given to charitable organisations.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY JULY 17, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Any important work that is incomplete can be handled nicely this morning while you are feeling inspired. Attend to civic matters and don't be too forceful with newcomers on the scene.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) A good morning to be wide awake to some advanced means by which you will be able to gain your deep objectives after which think how they can apply to your worldly position.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Whatever you have in mind to extend your practical activities should be seriously considered after which you can find better means for making such a reality.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) There are many pointers you can get that are excellent for you from a talkative partner after which put in motion new methods to make such ideas work.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Think about the various activities to be done by you and act more swiftly to make them work. Then you get someone new interests from an outsider.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Whatever pleasures appeal to you should be followed through and appointment made right away after which you can get into practical activities to be done.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) This is the moment when your home early demands you consider what to do to raise the concord there while later you can be practical about recreations you enjoy.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is the morning to get in touch with those who look to you for advice while later you have a good chance to please your family by the introduction of a friend.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Think about how to add substantially to your income and assets after which you can get into the actual accepted means to accomplish this purpose.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You can be very subjective today in letting others know of the true aims that impel you while in the evening you have very down to earth ideas for making money.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You need to expand your consciousness to see things in a broader light during the daytime and tonight you have a good chance to make them practical.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) The morning finds you with some clever plan for bringing wit, you want right to yourself while tonight you need to be secretive about your aims.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Your worldly success can be more assured in the daytime if you concentrate upon promises made but then in the evening you see how to obtain personal ambitions.

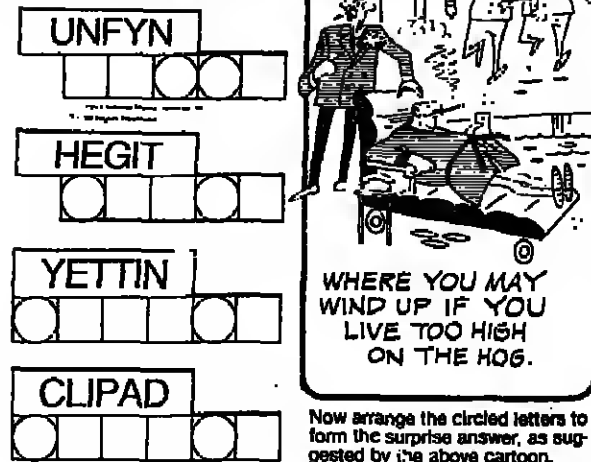
THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Print answer here: _____

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: BEGUN FLUKE TYPING ORPHAN

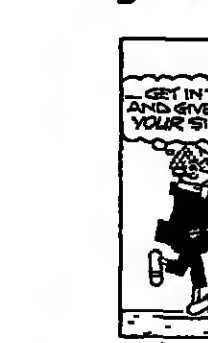
Answer: The first thing you plant in your garden—YOUR FEET

Peanuts

By Charles M. Schulz



Andy Capp



Mutt 'n' Jeff



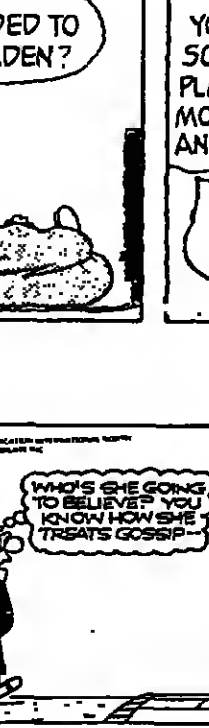
(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: BEGUN FLUKE TYPING ORPHAN

Answer: The first thing you plant in your garden—YOUR FEET

THE Daily Crossword

by Evelyn Barashoff



Yes! Here's the Puzzle Solved:



(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: BEGUN FLUKE TYPING ORPHAN

Answer: The first thing you plant in your garden—YOUR FEET

Study to examine Jordan's transport sector

AMMAN — Whether using camels or trucks, Jordan has been a transit centre for the Middle East since ancient times. The transport sector earns valuable revenues and generates around 10 per cent of all jobs in the country. Activity has suffered as a result of the Gulf crisis and the continuing loss of transit trade to Iraq, but there is no doubt that the sector will continue to play a major role in the Jordanian economy.

The European Community (EC) is now supporting a Road Transport Policy and Institutions Issues Study which is to look into the key policies and institutional issues in transport.

The study is one component of the overall Third Transport Project for Jordan which also includes improvement of the 71 kilometres bottleneck road section of the Ajlun-Amman highway and pavement rehabilitation of key sectors of the main road network. The total cost of the project is \$80 million, cofinanced

by the European Investment Bank (EIB), the World Bank (WB) and the Jordanian government.

Some five European consultants working in association with qualified Jordanian consultants, have now been invited to offer for the study by Aug. 8.

The study, which is being funded from the fourth EC-Jordan Financial and Technical Protocol, will be divided into two components. The road transport policy issues element will identify

a more effective cost recovery strategy and outline a road transport regulatory regime which addresses issues of tariff setting, overloading and penalties, licensing and import controls and the optimisation of resources and economic benefits.

The second element covers road transport institution improvement and will examine the present institutions in the road sector and their performance with a view to formulating proposals and strategies for strengthening

government involvement in the road sector in a suitable way.

The studies will also open up the possibilities for serious debate on the issues of transport policies and strategies.

The successful consultant will be required to organise two seminars, the first one at the presentation of the inception reports for the two studies. Government representatives involved in transport, housing, planning and finance and others from the trucking industry, consultants and con-

tractors along with representatives of the WB, EIB, EC and other major donors, will be able to discuss problems and ways of tackling them.

The second seminar will take place upon submission of the draft reports and will present the study team's findings and recommendations. These can then be discussed so that there is full understanding of the implications of the recommendations by all parties — European Community Newsletter.

Egypt to boost gas prices paid to oil firms

CAIRO (R) — Egypt has agreed to a new pricing formula which will pay all foreign oil companies more for natural gas they produce, a senior official has said.

Mustafa Sharaawi, chairman of the state-owned Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation (EGPC), said Egypt will apply a new pricing formula agreed with Royal Dutch Petroleum Co. subsidiary Shell Egypt, which links gas to the price of crude oil rather than fuel oil, to all companies.

Oil industry sources estimate the new formula would boost gas prices by about 10 per cent, part of a strategy by Egypt to encourage increased production of natural gas, cut domestic oil consumption and raise oil exports.

"The other companies will probably go before the People's Assembly at the same time as Shell, in September or October," Mr. Sharaawi told Reuters.

EGPC signed an agreement in February with Shell which prices gas at 85 per cent of the price of Egypt's Suez Blend crude oil

Arabs urged to free their markets to woo investors

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Restrictions in Arab markets are dissuading local investors from bringing back their huge overseas funds despite large commercial losses abroad, Arab experts say.

Investments in the region still account for less than six per cent of the total Arab investment abroad although regional countries have embarked on measures to reform their economies.

Bankers said the oil-rich Gulf states, which own more than half those assets, lost around \$25 billion in the 1987 world stock market crash while Kuwait alone lost most of its investment of \$5 billion in Spain last year.

Another loss of around \$80 billion was sustained by Arab investors in 1992 due to a sharp decline in the U.S. dollar and interest rates.

The losses have intensified calls for repatriating part of the overseas funds but investors still find the local market unfeasible.

Mr. Sharaawi said Shell would amend the agreements of other foreign gas producers in Egypt, currently Amoco Corp, Spain's Repsol S.A., British Gas and the local arm of Agip SPA, IECC.

Shell, Repsol, IECC and Norway's Norsk Hydro have also discovered gas in Egypt's Western Desert but are not yet producing there.

Industry sources estimated the new pricing formula would work out at a little over 2.2 per million British Thermal Units (BTU), compared to about two per million BTU paid now.

Mr. Sharaawi said Egypt currently produced and consumed about 1.1 billion cubic feet (31 million cubic metres) of gas per day, equivalent to about 200,000 barrels per day (b/d) of oil, and planned to boost this by about 10

per cent a year.

Egypt produces about 900,000 b/d of oil but exports less than half that.

Mr. Sharaawi said Repsol, IECC and Norsk Hydro were negotiating about building a pipeline linking their Western Desert finds to the Nile Delta town of Damanhour. Oil sources estimate the cost at several hundred million dollars.

"For the time being, Shell are not talking to them because they think they have a big discovery, in which case they will build their own line," he said.

Shell has confirmed a find of about 1.5 trillion cubic feet (42.5 billion cubic metres) in its Obed concession in the Western Desert, but is now drilling to try to prove 3.1 trillion cubic feet.

Mr. Sharaawi said Shell could eventually find up to seven trillion cubic feet (198 billion cubic metres) in the field, which would boost Egypt's 12 trillion cubic feet (340 billion cubic metres) gas reserves by nearly 60 per cent.

Other bankers said that despite losses abroad, overseas investment remains more profitable as the return is higher. They also argue the Arab markets are relatively small because they are not open to each other.

The Kuwaiti-based Arab Corporation for Guaranteeing Investment (ACGI) cited another obstacle for the return of overseas funds: Lack of information on investment opportunities in the region.

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LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midweek on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Friday.

	1.2830/40	Canadian dollar
U.S. \$1:00 costs	1.7245/55	Deutschmarks
	1.9390/00	Dutch guilders
	1.5182/92	Swiss francs
	35.55/56	Belgian francs
	5.8840/90	French francs
	1991.03/0	Italian lire
	107.55/65	Japanese yen
	7.9900/00	Swedish crowns
	7.3350/50	Norwegian crowns
	6.7100/7200	Danish crowns
	\$1.4815/25	
One sterling	\$393.30/393.80	

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ORGANIZED MARKET ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD 15/07/1993 - 16/07/1993

WEEKLY REPORT

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
1. JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	1,521,684	128.00	128.00	128.00
2. JORDAN AGRICULTURAL BANK	1,704,333	7.000	7.000	7.000
3. JORDAN POSTAL BANK	231,380	15.100	15.100	15.100
4. JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	1,187,408	9.250	9.250	9.250
5. JORDAN DEVELOPMENT BANK	671,321	9.250	9.250	9.250
6. JORDAN AGRICULTURAL BANK	1,704,333	7.000	7.000	7.000
7. JORDAN POSTAL BANK	231,380	15.100	15.100	15.100
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Ogata: U.N. may pull out of Bosnia

GENEVA (R) — U.N. aid chief Sadako Ogata conceded for the first time Friday that the United Nations may have to pull out of Bosnia because of security fears and lack of funds.

Addressing a major donors' meeting that delegates said could decide the fate of U.N. operations in Bosnia, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees said: "We want to carry on, but the parties are rendering impossible our work in many areas."

"Never have the obstacles and risks been so dreadful and unacceptable as during the last two months."

Some 40 states and international organisations were represented at Friday's meeting, which was originally scheduled as a routine session of the "humanitarian issues working group" of Geneva's international conference on former Yugoslavia.

Peace mediators Lord Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg, head of the U.N. operations in former Yugoslavia, sat beside Mrs. Ogata.

Delegates said before the meeting that a recent escalation of Bosnia's ethnic conflict and a tightening of the Serb stranglehold on Sarajevo meant the meeting was not just about raising money to keep Bosnia alive next winter.

"If we have no money and no security, then how can we carry on? This has to be decided soon," one aid official said.

Mrs. Ogata, whose UNHCR

leads the Bosnia relief operation, denied media speculation that the U.N. had been using relief deliveries as a "bargaining chip" in peace talks.

According to the reports, U.N. envoy Stoltenberg has been warning of a U.N. pull-out from Bosnia only to force reluctant Bosnian Muslim leaders to negotiate on a Serb-Croat plan to divide Bosnia into three ethnic mini-states.

Meanwhile Bosnian Serbs besieging the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo were reported to be moving forces towards the beleaguered capital from south east Bosnia after capturing the town of Tuzla early this week.

Tuzla, 25 kilometres south east of Sarajevo, has been a key link in the precarious supply corridor from the Bosnian capital to the Serb-besieged eastern enclave of Gorazde.

Some of the 3,500 refugees who fled from Tuzla to the Muslim-held Mount Iman overlooking Sarajevo spoke of Serb columns sweeping forward in their wake, apparently bound for the Sarajevo front, Peter Kessler, spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees in Sarajevo, said.

"A major refugee influx could result," Mr. Kessler said. Tuzla was captured Monday in an assault personally led by Bosnian Serb army commander General Ratko Mladic.

Gorazde, the last big Muslim enclave in eastern Bosnia, was

brimming with up to 65,000 refugees, some of who have fled several times from various Serb campaigns which have overrun Muslim forces and captured all other major towns in the area.

A U.N. relief convoy was stopped from reaching Gorazde Friday by women demonstrators for the second time in a week.

Bosnian radio reported that Serb forces shelled the centre of Gorazde, a U.N.-designated "safe area" where international monitors are deployed, but the U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR), could only confirm shelling of its hinterland.

U.N. military officials reported "very intense fighting" in and around the southern Bosnian divided city of Mostar stretching south along the mountainous Neretva River valley.

The town of Buna 10 kilometres south of Mostar, captured by Muslim-led government forces earlier this week, was under heavy counter-attack from Bosnian Croat Forces (HVO).

UNPROFOR spokesman Commander Barry Frewer said. UNPROFOR has unconfirmed reports that the HVO ground assaults on Buna and nearby Blagaj have been coordinated with Serb shelling of the Muslim-held pocket, he said.

Bosnian Muslim-controlled radio also said that Muslim-led government forces had broken a Croat offensive in the city and that regular Croatian army units had been thrown into battle

alongside Bosnian Croat forces. Bosnian Croats accused Muslim forces of using civilians as a human shield in the fighting around Mostar Thursday. The report could not be independently verified.

In a separate development, rebel Serbs signed an agreement Friday drafted by international mediators to avert a new war over a bridge Croatian authorities plan to open Sunday.

Under the agreement, yet to be signed by Croatia, the Maslenica bridge and Zadar Airport would be placed under U.N. protection and closed to both Serb and Croat troops, Serb spokesman Vojin Susa told reporters.

Under the agreement, drafted by mediators Geert Ahrens and Knut Vollebæk, Croatian troops must withdraw from the territory they captured from the Serbs in a January offensive.

Tension has mounted over Croatian plans to open the key bridge over the Maslenica Channel on the Adriatic coast and the nearby Zadar Airport Sunday — a move Serb gunners who are well within range have vowed to stop.

The United Nations have warned the Croatian plans contravene Security Council resolutions.

"The building of the pontoon bridge may proceed after the signature of this agreement by both sides," Mr. Susa said, warning the alternative would be a "bloody war."

Georgians launch big offensive in Abkhazia

TBILISI (R) — Georgia announced its forces had launched a big offensive against Abkhaz separatist rebels Friday after they had rejected an ultimatum to pull back from two villages inside the province of Abkhazia.

"Today Georgian forces mounted a large-scale offensive against the positions of the Abkhazians," a spokesman for the Georgian army said in the besieged regional capital of Sukhumi. He said the offensive was aimed at driving back the rebels from the villages of Shroma and Akhalseni.

There was no immediate confirmation from the Abkhazian



Relatives of an Abkhazian officer cry during his funeral in Shroma. The officer was killed during the heavy fighting to capture Shroma (AFP photo)

side of the offensive.

"The Georgian forces have seized some strategically important hills around Sukhumi," the Georgian army spokesman, reached by telephone from Tbilisi, said of the offensive.

The Georgians had threatened the Abkhaz rebels with massive retaliation unless they withdrew from Shroma and Akhalseni by midnight last Wednesday (2000 GMT Wednesday) and stopped shelling Sukhumi.

Russia warns Ukraine against nuclear status

MOSCOW (R) — Russia's Foreign Ministry warned Ukraine Friday against proclaiming itself a nuclear state, saying it would threaten world-wide disarmament and could cause accidents like the 1986 Chernobyl disaster.

"It is not clear that making Ukraine a nuclear state is tantamount to opening a Pandora's box, giving a green light to the appearance of other nuclear states, putting an end to the non-proliferation of nuclear arms and saying 'no' to nuclear disarmament," the ministry said in a statement.

"How many Chernobyls could this bring?" the statement added.

The Ukrainian parliament is deadlocked over approving the START-1 and non-proliferation treaties under which it is to give up for good its share of the former Soviet nuclear arsenal.

Parliament this month ruled that former Soviet nuclear weapons were national property — a move short of proclaiming nuclear status.

But a majority of deputies are opposed to quick ratification of the treaties and say Ukraine must first receive security guarantees

and compensation well in excess of \$175 million offered by the United States.

Meanwhile, technicians have begun dismantling 10 of 176 former Soviet strategic nuclear missiles in Ukraine to prepare them for transfer to Russia, the daily Izvestia reported Friday.

But it said the warheads removed from SS-19 rockets would be held in Ukraine pending the outcome of an impassioned debate on disarmament in the former Soviet republic.

In Kiev, the Ukrainian Defence Ministry confirmed that the process of taking the missiles apart had begun.

Izvestia said the complex process of dismantling the oldest of the missiles had started Thursday. Computer programmes were being removed and highly toxic liquid fuel made safe.

"Although one swallow does not make a summer, it cannot be denied that the ice has been broken," it said.

"Despite the difficulties in relations, two states, Russia and Ukraine, and their political leaders have at last understood the threat to nuclear security represented by strategic missiles rockets ageing beyond their scheduled lifespan."

Mississippi, Missouri rivers hit record level

ST. LOUIS, Missouri (AFP) — The Mississippi and Missouri rivers reached record levels Thursday as forecasters predicted more heavy rains in the already flooded Midwest.

Hundreds of people living between the two rivers north of St. Louis who had resisted evacuation orders were told to leave the area as fears mounted that the waterways would soon wash over the levees.

Local officials said the damage could be as high as \$5 billion. Mr. Clinton has visited flooded areas in Iowa twice in two weeks and is expected to visit stricken areas in St. Louis Saturday.

Centrist parties vow to keep Japan LDP out of government

TOKYO (AFP) — The leader of a new Japanese centrist party vowed Friday to keep the governing Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) out of power after Sunday's election, saying political instability was better than corrupt rule.

Monihiro Hosokawa, head of the Japan New Party (JNP), told reporters that his group and the Sakigake, or Pioneer party, would vote with an opposition coalition to block an LDP candidate from winning the premiership in a parliamentary vote.

"We have no intention of approving an LDP administration" even if the JNP and the Sakigake fail to win a first parliamentary vote for prime minister, said Mr. Hosokawa, who defected from the beleaguered ruling group to form his own party.

"Our top priority is to stop it," Mr. Hosokawa said. "Instability is more desirable than rotten stability."

The JNP chief said his party, which did not have any seats in the last parliament but is expected to win around 40 Sunday, might join an opposition coalition to see the LDP ousted if the other parties involved shared the same policy aims.

Mr. Hosokawa's group and the Pioneer Party agreed last month to ally after the elections but there was some concern among other opposition groups that if the two parties cast blank ballots in the vote for prime minister the LDP might retain its 38-year-old grip on power.

Reports have said that both the LDP or a coalition government might face difficulties in winning a stable majority without the support of the two centrist parties. The Pioneer Party is expected to increase its seat count in the last parliament.

The LDP, panicked by the wave of electoral discontent that threatens to sweep it from power, has raised the spectre of political instability and economic chaos if the opposition wins the July 18 polls.

Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa continued on a similar theme Friday, telling reporters that the opposition coalition had failed to reach a consensus on policies.

"When you work together in politics, you need to have common policies," Mr. Miyazawa said. "It is not acceptable that (political parties) cooperate without common policies."

Even within the opposition group there have been murmurings of discontent about coalition member, the Japan Renewal Party, which was formed by politicians linked to former top LDP figures now embroiled in various scandals.

Japan Renewal Party chief Tsutomu Hata has some ties to disgraced former Premier Noboru Takeshita and the once-powerful Shin Kanemaru, whose trial on charges of massive tax evasion is due to open the week after the election.

Mr. Kanemaru, the 78-year-old former LDP vice president, resigned from parliament last year after admitting receiving \$5 million in illegal political donations from a mob-linked trucking firm.

After the last parliament was brought down by a no-confidence vote centering on Mr. Miyazawa's timidity in pressing forward with political reform, most of the opposition groups said they would band together to get rid of the LDP.

Mr. Hata, who quit the LDP after helping opposition parties pass the reform bill and formed the Japan Renewal Party, is the opposition candidate viewed as having the best chance of becoming premier.

China appoints Hong Kong working group

PEKING (AFP) — China Friday officially appointed members of a high-powered working group on post-1997 Hong Kong and dismissed concerns the body would undermine the British colony's present administration.

But, in remarks unlikely to ease Hong Kong jitters about China's intentions, one newly appointed committee member disclosed to reporters that People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops would be deployed throughout the SAR after 1997.

"PLA troops will be deployed in downtown and rural Hong Kong," said Deputy PLA chief of General Staff Xu Huzi, adding that they would, like their British counterparts, occupy the Tamar Naval Base in the central business district.

National People's Congress (NPC) Chairman Qiao Guh handed over appointment certificates to members of the preliminary working committee for the 1996 preparatory committee for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), as the territory is to be known after reversion to Chinese rule in 1997.



U.S. Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Hershel Gober (2nd from left) Friday hands over microfilms containing information of Vietnamese missing soldiers to Vietnamese MIA Office Director Ho Xuan Dich (right) as U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord (left) looks on at the Hanoi Army Museum (AFP photo)

U.S. returns captured Vietnamese documents

HANOI (R) — The United States Friday handed over the first of three million pages of Vietnamese documents captured during the Vietnam War to help Hanoi trace its own 300,000 missing soldiers.

The documents were handed over during talks at a centre where experts from the two sides examine Vietnamese wartime films and archives for clues about the fate of the 2,253 U.S. servicemen still listed as missing-in-action (MIA).

"It's to help them find out about the fate of their missing people," Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord, head of a U.S. presidential delegation, said afterwards. "I'm sure they'll appreciate it."

The documents — captured diaries, policy documents, battle plans and soldiers' letters — were stored on microfilm, a form of miniaturised record-keeping used in the 1960s and 1970s.

They were handed over in two

small boxes by Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Hershel Gober, another leader of the U.S. delegation, who said President Bill Clinton had authorised their release.

Mr. Clinton sent the delegation to press Vietnam for more help in tracing U.S. MIAs.

"We have asked for a lot of things and the Vietnamese have been responsive," a senior delegation member told reporters. "The Vietnamese have asked us for things — we've attempted to be responsive."

A senior Vietnamese official said after the talks: "We have got a better mood for understanding."

Mr. Lord declined to speculate on the impact the U.S. action would have on the MIA issue. U.S. President Bill Clinton announced the delegation on July 2 when he lifted U.S. restrictions on French International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans to Vietnam.

He told the team to push for help in recovering U.S. remains, getting more documents, resolving 92 "discrepancy cases" where "twice men were last seen alive and presumed captured, and checking out 'live sighting' reports of U.S. prisoners after the war."

The United States has set the fullest possible accounting for the fate of U.S. MIAs as a condition for further action to normalise relations 20 years after the war ended.

Vietnam wants the United States to lift its economic embargo completely and to establish diplomatic relations. It says it is doing all it can to cooperate on the MIA issue and denies that it has held any U.S. prisoners of war since 1973.

Vietnamese officials have pointed to an imbalance between U.S. insistence on resolving the fate of U.S. MIAs and Hanoi's inability to account for its own 300,000, though it won the war.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Japan quake death toll rises to 142

TOKYO (R) — Sixteen more bodies were recovered Friday after the deadliest earthquake to hit Japan since 1948, raising the death toll to 142. A police spokesman said 124 people were still unaccounted for. He said 152 were injured by the tremor, which measured 7.8 on the Richter Scale and struck northern Japan Monday night. About 1,000 policemen were searching the small island of Okushiri off the southwest coast of Hokkaido. Okushiri was hardest hit by the tremors, which triggered off tidal waves and fires. "I believe our search operation for the missing people in the rubble is likely to continue till the end of next week," the spokesman said.

Nigeria labour group rejects new poll

LAGOS (AFP) — Nigeria's main trade union organisation, the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), has rejected a presidential election ordered by the military government and insisted that the results of the June 12 election be upheld. The NLC also warned that trade unions would challenge the military with unspecified "actions" if it failed to hand over to a civilian government by Aug. 27. Results of the June 12 election were cancelled by the junta after the opposition Social Democratic Party's candidate Chief Moshood Abiola claimed victory. The junta maintained there had been voting irregularities. "The Nigerian workers and their trade unions unequivocally dissociate themselves from the fresh presidential election being offered by the federal military government," the NLC said Thursday in a communique issued at the end of its national executive meeting.

Castro to listen to U.S. proposal

SALVADOR DE BAHIA, Brazil (AFP) — Cuban President Fidel Castro told Colombian President Cesar Gaviria Thursday he was willing to listen to a U.S. proposal on Washington's embargo on Havana, Colombian government sources said. "The Colombian president suggested to him the need to establish a communication link with the United States to resolve (the issue of) the 30-year-old embargo, and Fidel said he was prepared to listen to a U.S. proposal in that regard," a source said after the presidents met on the sidelines of the third Ibero-American Summit here. Mr. Castro insisted, however, that he was not prepared to dismantle Cuba's socialist system, the sources said. The Cuban leader's remarks did not come in response to any policy toward Cuba until there are clear signs of democratic opening and improved respect for human rights, Argentina, meanwhile, was the lone holdout on a resolution condemning the U.S. embargo of Cuba at the two-day summit, attended by leaders of Spain, Portugal and 21 of their former Latin American colonies.

U.N.: Accord close in Haiti talks

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Haiti's warring politicians reached tentative agreement on almost all of the issues dividing them Thursday in talks aimed at naming a new prime minister and restoring democracy, a spokesman for special U.N. mediator Dante Caputo said. But one major hurdle remained — what to do with 10 "illegally" elected senators that supporters of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide say must go if Haiti is to return to democratic rule. Mr. Caputo's spokesman said tentative agreements have been worked out between Mr. Aristide's supporters and backers of the September 1991 military coup on such issues as an amnesty and a political truce. All that remained was the tricky question of what to do with the senators selected in an election staged by the military-backed de facto government last Jan. 18, he said.

Aliyev reports assassination bid

MOSCOW (R) — Azerbaijan's acting head of state Geidar Aliyev said Friday there had been an attempt on his life Thursday night. Local journalists in the Azeri capital quoted Mr. Aliyev, who became acting head of state after elected President Abulfaz Elchibey fled Baku, as telling a parliamentary session that the opposition Popular Front had mounted the assassination attack. "They (the Popular Front) want to remove me at all costs," Mr. Aliyev, a former Soviet Communist politician, member, said. Yadiqar Mamedli, a spokesman for the Popular Front, denied Mr. Aliyev's assertion. "Neither against Aliyev or (Prime Minister) Suret Guseinov has anything been undertaken. The Popular Front will, as before, continue its struggle through peaceful means," he said in a comment by telephone.

Grachev goes to Tajik border

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev left Friday for the Tajik-Afghan border, which has come under repeated attack by Afghanistan-based Tajik rebels. Mr. Grachev's spokesman said. The last-minute trip with Tajik Prime Minister Abdulmalik Abdulajjanov was arranged to oversee a Russian parliamentary directive allowing Russian forces to use all necessary means to defend the Central Asian state from the rebels, a move welcomed Friday by Tajik authorities. "The implementation of these decisions demands the presence on the spot" of General Grachev and Abdulajjanov, a spokesman for the Tajik authorities told AFP Friday. The militants have attacked a series of Tajik border posts this week.

Robbers make off with \$7.9m worth of gems

LONDON (AFP) — Three armed men made off with \$7.9 million worth of gems, including a flawless heart-shaped diamond valued at \$2.25 million, in a raid Thursday on a central London jewellers' shop, police said. Gem of Knightsbridge, which owns the premises, said the knowledge of the robbers displayed in making straight for the sorting room and negotiating three five-digit combinations locked doors suggested "an inside job." The raiders, who wore stocking masks, completed the robbery within five minutes without staff on the upper floor or customers in a cafe opposite realising it had taken place. The gang made a clean getaway after putting handcuffs on the employees of the Hatton Garden shop. Multi-millionaire gem merchant Laurence Graff, who owns the unique heart-shaped diamond, appealed to the robbers not to attempt to recut it, saying it would lose much of its value if cut to be sold on. Graff, known in the trade as the "king of diamonds," said the hule-white stone — about the size of a cherry — was unique. The 25.78 carat diamond was to be the centre-piece of a brooch. Experts described it as "very important stone." The raiders also made off with numerous loose cut diamonds bringing the worth of their haul close to \$7.9 million, but they were thought to have missed another single gem worth more than \$5 million.

Burmese prostitutes tell of horrors in Thailand

BANGKOK (R) — Burmese prostitutes arrested Wednesday in a raid in southern Thailand have told police they were beaten, raped and kept in brothels surrounded by barbed wire where they were forced to provide sex up to 10 hours a day. Newspapers Friday quoted the women as saying they were lured into the brothels by both Thai and Burmese procurers. They were given two meals a day and forced to provide sex to many customers from 4 p.m. to 2 a.m. without being paid. One woman named Mumi said she was beaten and punched in the stomach after refusing to have sex because she was several months pregnant. The police detained 144 Burmese women ranging in age from 15 to 34 from three brothels in southern Thailand after being tipped off by regular customers that many of the prostitutes were clearly being kept there against their will. The raid was part of a publicised crackdown on widespread prostitution in Ranong province and its capital, which sits just across from Burma's southernmost point and acts as a port and rest and recreation centre for both Burmese and Thai fishermen. One police source who asked not to be named said at least 50 brothels or businesses organising sex services and employing at least 3,000 Burmese still exist in Ranong. A police spokesman in Ranong said they are preparing to formally file charges against 153 people, including several pimps, on charges of illegal entry into Thailand.

AIDS claims first victim in Kazakhstan

MOSCOW (AFP) — A woman was died of AIDS in eastern Kazakhstan, becoming the first person in the country to fall victim to the fatal disease. ITAR-TASS News Agency said Friday Murat Saparbekov, head of the campaign against AIDS in Kazakhstan, said a group of doctors had gone to the Taldy Kurgan region where the woman had lived. Local newspapers said 19 HIV positive cases had been recorded in Kazakhstan so far — two children, three homosexuals and nine foreign students, since expelled from the country.

Mobile phones can interfere with hearing aids

SYDNEY (R) — A new standard of digital mobile telephones being introduced in North America, Europe and Australia can interfere with nearby hearing aids, an International Auditory Conference said. "Hearing aid users standing within a few metres of someone using the new phones will be subject to a loud buzzing noise in their hearing aids," organisers of the International Conference on Hearing Rehabilitation in Sydney said in a statement. The claim was backed by a report to the Australian government which found that the phones, known as GSM (Global System for Mobiles), can interfere with some hearing aids from about 10 metres (33 feet) away. The National Acoustics Laboratory report said more powerful GSM phones begin interfering from about 35 metres (115 feet). Even the best of hearing aids rendered useless within 10 metres of a digital phone, the report said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kankunen sets the early pace

CORDOBA, Argentina (AFP) — Finland's former world champion Juba Kankunen and Welsh co-driver Nicky Grist set the early pace at the wheel of their Toyota Celica in the Argentina Rally. They completed the first leg of the four-day event holding a 37secs lead over Italy's Massimo Biasion and Tiziano Siviero in a Ford Escort. Kankunen, who won four of the opening eight special stages outright, finished in 1hr 51mins 46secs. Gustavo Trelles of Uruguay and Jorge Del Buono of Argentina held third place in a Lancia — 3mins 3secs behind the pacesetters — and Frenchmen Didier Auriol and Bernard Occelli were fourth in the second Toyota Celica.

Atletico president's suspension quashed

GENEVA (R) — UEFA quashed Atletico Madrid President Jesus Gil Y Gil's six-match suspension Thursday for lack of evidence that he behaved improperly towards the referee during a game. But the European Football Union's board rejected appeals by several Atletico players against match bans for unsportsmanlike behaviour towards German referee Aron Schmidhuber during the European Cup Winners' Cup semifinal against Italian club Parma in April. Parma went on to win the cup by beating Belgian club Antwerp 3-1. Atletico did not appeal against a 100,000 Swiss francs (\$66,000) fine for the team's misbehaviour. The club were ordered to pay 25,000 Swiss francs (\$16,500) towards appeal costs.

Jordan draws the crowds

AURORA, Illinois (AFP) — More than 17,000 fans turned the basketball courts, and veteran Arnold Palmer, king of the fairways. What normally would have been a crowd of about 5,000 for a pro-am round of the Senior Open at Stonewood Country Club swelled to an estimated 17,500 who watched Jordan held his own on Palmer's turf for a while. In fact the basketball star was even one-stroke clear at the turn before his game disintegrated. Palmer eventually came in on 73 while Jordan, who plays to an eight handicap, shot an estimated 36-45-81. Over the last five holes, Jordan found nothing but trouble, including an out-of-bounds tee shot on No. 14.

Golf club turns off lights for landing

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — A golf club near Kuala Lumpur's International Airport will stop night golfing because the lights were posing a hazard to incoming planes, the New Straits Times newspaper said Friday. It quoted a Malaysian Airline official as saying the Glenmarie Golf Club would end night golfing until its floodlights were modified to comply with International Aviation Safety standards. Pilots approaching the airport had complained the glare was making landings difficult.

Laudrup joins AC Milan on loan

MILAN, Italy (R) — Brian Laudrup, a member of Denmark team who won the 1992 European Championship, has joined Italian title holders AC Milan on loan, a club spokesman said Friday. The midfielder moves from relegated Fiorentina and is expected to play wide on the right, a position previously occupied by Dutchman Ruud Gullit who has just joined Sampdoria. The deal is for one season only and Fiorentina, in the second division for the first time in more than 50 years, hope Laudrup will rejoin them in 12 months. They plan to keep up the payments on the villa the player was renting in Florence in the hope that he will return.

Arbachakov wins 1st title clash

KOBE, Japan (AFP) — Defending champion Yuri Arbachakov of Russia narrowly outpointed American challenger Ysaias Zamudio over 12 rounds here Friday to retain his World Boxing Council (WBC) flyweight title. The fight was the first professional title match between a Russian and an American boxer. Arbachakov, struggling against the challenger's tricky southpaw attacks, produced a last burst of energy in the final round, denying the American victory in his first crack at a world title. It was the third defence of the title by the 26-year-old Russian, a 1989 World Cup 51-kilogramme champion, since he wrestled it from Muangchai Kittikarn of Thailand in June last year. It was also his 16th consecutive win in his undefeated career, including 13 victories inside the distance.

World ice dance judges banned

PARIS (AFP) — Six of the nine judges from the World Ice Dance Championships have been banned from officiating during the Lillehammer winter Olympics in Norway in February. The six — from the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Russia, Ukraine and the United States — were suspended by the International Skating Union for showing "national bias and prejudice" last March. Judges have been suspended before but never on this scale.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TANNAR HIRSH
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OUT FOR THE COUNT

North-South vulnerable. East deals.

NORTH
♠ 8 7 6 2
♥ A 9 6
♦ J 9
♣ A 10 9 3

EAST
♠ 5 4
♥ K J 5 4 3 2
♦ Q 7 6 5
♣ K Q J 8 7 6 4

SOUTH
♠ A K Q J 10 9
♥ Q 8 7
♦ A K 2
♣ 5

The bidding:
East: South 3NT
Pass 4♣ Pass 5NT
Pass 6♣ Pass 5♥
Pass 6♠ Pass

Opening lead: Two of ♠

Every card tells a story. Adapt the plot to your plan of campaign and a new finale is yours to write. This deal explains what we mean.

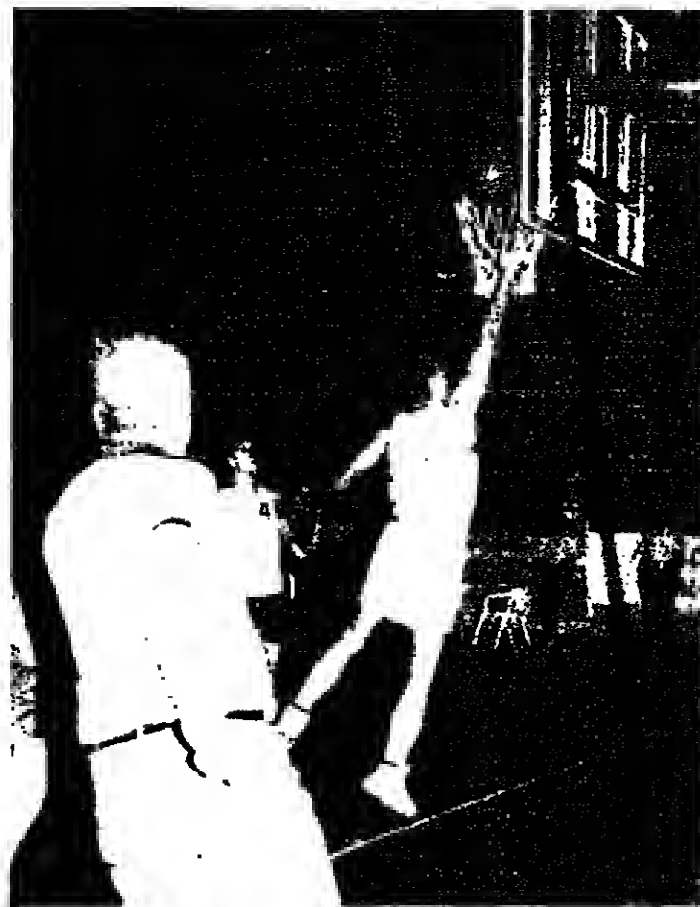
South has a close decision whether to double or simply jump to four spades over East's opening preempt. With so many offensive and defensive tricks, we like South's decision to double first then bid spades

to show extra values. When North cue-bid twice to confirm spade support and two first-round controls, South needed no further encouragement to contract for slam.

West's opening lead of the two of clubs is an obvious singleton. Without any clue from the auction, declarer would have chosen to play East for king of hearts to land the fulfilling trick. Is that still a viable line?

With West marked for a singleton club there is an excellent chance of engineering an endplay, even though South does not have the entries to completely strip the hand. Declarer wins the ace of clubs, draws trumps in two rounds, cashes the ace and king of diamonds and ruffs a diamond in dummy. East can now be counted for a singleton heart. Next, declarer leads a low heart from the table and simply covers any card East produces.

As the cards lie, East's ten of hearts fetches the queen and is won by West's king. West is ensnared in an endplay. A heart lead away from the jack is into declarer's combined A 9 tenace, and any other plain suit allows declarer to shift a heart: from hand while ruffing in dummy. Either way, one heart trick is all declarer loses.



Yusef Zaghlool scores during the opening match against Albania of the Ukraine Thursday

Al Ahli International Championship begins

By Arab Hiyasat and
Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan's Al Ahli Thursday scored a victory 74-49 over Ukraine's Alekskram, in the opening match of Al Ahli International Basketball Championship.

Seven top Arab and international teams representing Syria, Lebanon, Algeria, the Ukraine, Romania and Jordan are participating in the week-long championship held on the occasion of Al Ahli Club's 50th anniversary.

The match was played at the Sports Palace Court under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein, and was attended by Minister of Youth Abdullah Oweidat as well as more than 2,000 basketball fans.

The opening ceremony included a folkloric dances by the Royal Jordanian Troupe as well as the Al Ahli Club troupe.

Al Ahli took the lead in the first half and continued to the end of the match. They were 22 ahead in the ninth minute.

Al Ahli's Yusef Zaghlool and Kamal Al Helou, who replaced the injured Naser Bushnaq as one of the pivots, led the scoring with the coordinated support of Al Ahli players.

Al Ahli led the first half 43-23. In the second half Jordan's 1992 title-holders resorted to press defence which succeeded in widening the gap between them. This gave Al Ahli's coach a chance to bring in substitutes to improve their skills.

Alekskram's top players, Oleg Lufertov, shot several three-pointers but Al Ahli continued to advance to the end of the match.

Doohan is off to flying start in San Marino

MUGELLO, Italy (AFP) — Australia's Michael Doohan made a record breaking start to his campaign to win the San Marino Grand Prix here Friday, seizing provisional pole position on his Honda.

Doohan, who is still searching for his first victory this season, scorched round in 1min 53.913sec — well inside the previous 500cc lap record of 1:54.461 set in 1991 by Kevin Schwantz.

But Schwantz, who currently leads the World Championship on a Suzuki, was only two tenths of a second off the pace in the sunny but humid conditions.

Japan's Shinichi Itoh was a surprise third fastest on his Honda, defying the reigning world champion Wayne Rainey.

Turkey says violence will not hamper Olympics bid

ISTANBUL (R) — A surge of Kurdish rebel and Islamic fundamentalist violence in Turkey will not hamper Istanbul's bid to hold the 2000 Olympics, a senior official said Friday.

"If there had been serious concerns of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), they would have been mentioned in an enquiry commission report," Sukru Erdem, state minister for sports, told a news conference.

Turkish sports officials said awarding the games to Istanbul would help promote peace in a region torn by civil wars, ethnic violence and bitter political rivalries.

Mr. Erdem said a nine-year war between the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and military forces was taking place in Turkey's eastern provinces, a long distance from Istanbul and posed no security problems for the city.

More than 6,350 people have been killed in Turkey since the PKK began its bloody independence struggle in 1984.

Rioting Islamic fundamentalists, riled by publication of Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses in a newspaper, set a hotel on fire in Istanbul on July 2, killing 30 people.

The report released earlier this week, said few security problems existed within Turkey, but that it was surrounded by unstable regions.

Members of the inquiry commission visited Turkey in April.

The report will help members of the IOC to select a venue for the games when they meet in Monaco on Sept. 23.

Other cities bidding for the games include Berlin, Peking, Sydney, Brasilia and Manchester.

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Soccer transfer fever hits Egypt

CAIRO (R) — Forget Duncan Ferguson, Ruud Gullit or David Platt. Soccer transfer fever has hit Egypt's two major clubs, whose battle for a star has become a national scandal.

The rivals' attempts to outbid each other have sparked fierce attacks in Egypt's press over rampant "free market economics" on the soccer pitch. Some have called for an end to the infant professional game.

Some commentators even suggested that the money involved was potentially politically damaging at a time when basic food prices have soared as economic reforms are introduced.

Although unprecedented in Egypt, the sums are paltry in comparison to the \$5.2 million (\$7.8 million) offered by Italian club Sampdoria for English midfielder Platt, or the British soccer

transfer record of \$4 million (\$5.97 million) offered by Glasgow Rangers for Dundee United striker Ferguson this week.

But last week, Reda Abdul Aal, midfielder for Egyptian champions Zamalek announced he would move to arch-rivals Ahli after getting angry with his present club, when they offered him only 75,000 Egyptian pounds (\$22,000) to sign for three more years.

Ahli officially countered with 100,000 pounds (\$30,000) and sidestepped Egyptian Federation rules that Abdul Aal could only receive 40 per cent of that by offering an extra sum from its supporters' club which would go direct to the player.

But now, Zamalek, who as the current club are not subject to the 40 per cent rule, have countered with a record 250,000 pound (\$75,000) offer, which commentators say will spark uncontrollable soccer inflation in Egypt.

Ahli would have to bid 625,000 pounds (\$186,000) to match the offer and Abdul Aal is refusing to stay with Zamalek at any price, prompting the question of whether he can be forced to or not by the federation.

"This is mad. No player can worth that much," said Gamal Mohammad, an avid Ahli supporter. As a civil servant, he takes home about 180 pounds (\$53) a month.

Millions of Egyptian soccer fans have been stunned at the money involved with each new development in the row, the first of its kind since Egypt formally professionalised the game in 1990.

Critics suggested the game's professional status should be abolished or at least examined as the Egyptian Soccer Federation announced Wednesday it was extending the official transfer season by two weeks and going into continual session to think out measures to deal with the crisis.

Galal Dowidar, editor of the mass circulation Al Akhbar, devoted a front page editorial this week to attacking the bidding as a distortion of the government's free market policies.

"Instead of respecting the principles of this policy in a sound way, the issue has been transformed into a stubborn auction between the two clubs.

"He (Abdul Aal) can't believe the price he's fetching in the mad stock market of soccer players. He's dazzled by it and knows he's not worth a tenth part of the sum," Mr. Dowidar wrote.

Marseille boss faces libel suit over Gestapo claims

PARIS (AFP) — The French Justice Ministry Friday started libel action against Olympique Marseille President Bernard Tapie over accusations that "Gestapo" methods were used to investigate France's soccer bribes scandal.

Justice Minister Pierre Mebaignerie said the proceedings were meant "to protect the judiciary against serious accusations."

Mr. Tapie's comments in a magazine interview on the bribes investigation outraged prosecutors and investigating magistrates.

But the Marseille owner was unrepentant. He said any court case would be a chance to "expose the incredible methods" used to inquire allegations that three Valenciennes players were bribed before a match against the French champions.

The minister said the editor and two journalists of the VSD magazine, which published the Tapie interview, would also be pursued. "When excessive words are used you have to put up buffers," said Mr. Mebaignerie.

In the VSD interview, Mr. Tapie said the police "arrive in my offices and keep my secretary detained for 20 hours to a cupboard where she cannot even sit down. That is not legal. It is something out of the inquisition, the Gestapo."

Mr. Tapie also likened the police action to the rounding up of Jews during the war. But Tapie has since apologised for those comments to the Jewish community.

On Friday, he reacted angrily to the justice minister's announcement. He said the action would be a chance to "let all French people know precisely what incredible methods have used by the judiciary in this case."

He said the tactics did not "conform to the most elementary citizens' rights."

Mr. Tapie added: "My staff, Olympique Marseille players and all the other protagonists will tell about the pressure, the threats, the blackmail and the promises of all kinds pressed on them during all the questioning and detention."

The announcement of the proceedings came a day after Mr. Mebaignerie ordered the Valenciennes prosecutor Eric de Montgolfier to restrict his public declarations.

Mr. De Montgolfier said Friday he will now only communicate with the press through written statements following complaints that he has breaching judicial secrecy regulations.

Even President Francois Mitterrand had joined attacks made on the prosecutor for his outspoken comments.

Meanwhile, Mr. Tapie's parliamentary assistant was questioned Friday over the bribes scandal in which two Valenciennes players and Jean-Jacques Eydelie of Marseille and Jean-Pierre Bernes, the Marseille general manager, have so far been charged.

Marc Frattani was summoned for questioning and spent just over an hour with police.

Tapie, who is deputy for a Marseille constituency and a former government minister, also faces an investigation into allegations that he offered money to former Valenciennes coach Boro Primorac to take the blame for the bribes affair.

Roscioli wins 12th stage

MARSEILLE, France (AFP) — Fabio Roscioli of Italy won the 175km (109 miles) 12th stage of the Tour de France between Marseille and Dijon here Friday.

The 27-year-old Italian, who started the day in 123rd position overall (at 1:19.17), finished the longest stage on this year's Tour in seven hours 29 minutes and 44 seconds.

It was a first ever Tour stage victory for Roscioli, who broke from the pack midway through and rode the final 180km on his own.

"I loved my legs a little bit for today," said the Italian, "who finished 32 minutes behind in Thursday's second mountain stage."

Another Italian Massimo Ghirotto finished second, over nine minutes behind.

Over the race leader Miguel Indurain, celebrating his 29th birthday, took a well-earned rest after featuring at the front of the race for the last three stages.

The Spanish world number one retained the yellow jersey despite finishing over 20 minutes behind, and Dijonolaine Abdoujaparov of Uzbekistan kept the green jersey for the Tour's leading points winner.

Top American cycling hope Lance Armstrong quit the Tour de France here Friday.

The 21-year-old rider failed to start the 12th stage of the race. Armstrong surprised expectations by winning the eighth stage Sunday at Verdun but quit after the first two tortuous mountain stages in the Alps.

He finished an exhausted 97th after Thursday's stage, 28min 47sec behind the leaders and was 55min 48sec behind overall.

It was always expected that Armstrong, on his first Tour, would be withdrawn from the race early by his team, who argued it was a learning experience for the rookie American and they did not want to risk him getting injured.

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Jordan unaware of any U.N. demand for oil payment

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Senior officials said Friday they had no knowledge of a reported United Nations demand that Jordan pay 30 per cent of the value of the Iraqi oil it receives to a U.N. compensation fund if Baghdad and the world body reach an agreement on a one-time sale of Iraqi oil.

"I am not aware of any such demand," said Finance Minister Sami Gammo. "Nor do I think such a demand is practical since Iraqi oil supply to Jordan is in settlement of its debts to the Kingdom."

Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Al Anani also said the government did not have any knowledge of such a U.N. approach.

"We don't even know whether and how the Iraqi oil supply to Jordan is included in the proposed \$1.6 billion Iraqi oil sale under U.N. supervision," said Dr. Anani.

A report carried by the London-based Al Hayat Arabic-language daily quoted diplomatic sources in Amman as saying that the Kingdom would have to pay the U.N. 30 per cent of the value of the present Iraqi oil supplies of 50,000 barrels of crude and 25,000 barrels of fuel oil trucked to Jordan daily.

According to the report, the issue will be raised if and when Iraq and the U.N. reach an agreement on the proposed one-time sale of Iraqi oil.

Part of the proceeds of the

U.N.-controlled sale will be allocated to the U.N. compensation fund for victims of the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and to pay for U.N. costs related to the Gulf war ceasefire.

Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Walid Asfour described the report as "groundless."

"I do not know of any such request," Dr. Asfour was quoted as saying by the Al Rai Arabic daily.

Source close to the Iraq-U.N. discussions also said they were not aware of the Iraqi oil supply to Jordan being discussed at the world body in the context of the negotiations which resumed Thursday pending Baghdad's response to U.N. proposals.

"It is a logical demand under U.N. Security Council resolutions that would apply not only to Jordan but also to other countries as and when the sanctions against Iraq are totally lifted," said a U.N. source. "But it is not being discussed here now."

"The effort here is to reach an agreement with the Iraqis on an immediate one-time sale which will be strictly controlled by the U.N.," said the source, who preferred anonymity.

The source noted that Security Council resolutions demand that Iraq pay war reparations and compensate victims of its invasion of Kuwait as well as U.N. costs for monitoring and implementing the terms of the ceasefire which ended the Gulf war of 1991.

"In the context of an end to the sanctions against Iraq and the resumption of a free flow of Iraqi oil to the market, some mechanism has to be in place to ensure that part of the proceeds goes to the compensation fund," the source said.

The U.N. source as well as officials here hypothesized that any demand that Jordan pay any part of the value of the Iraqi oil supply to the Kingdom under present conditions would pose more questions than the purported proposal could answer.

These questions would include the linkage between the quantity that Iraq might be allowed to market in a one-time sale, the price applicable, the time when the arrangement would run out and how the U.N. could address the basic Jordanian argument that the Kingdom is receiving Iraqi oil in payment of Baghdad's debts and therefore it should be considered as a pure commercial transaction.

"It does not make sense to include the Iraqi supply to Jordan in the one-time sale," said a Western diplomat. "Formulas discussed in the past only concern a situation where Iraq returns to its former status as an oil exporter."

The Iraqi oil supply to Jordan, part of it free, part of it in payment of Baghdad's debts to Amman incurred during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, and part of it in return for food and medicine, is exempt from the international sanctions since no cash changes hands.



IMMIGRANTS TURNED AWAY: Taiwanese immigrants, including eight women, from the northern Keelung port Friday to the offshore Matsu island where they will be picked up by Chinese boats for home. China has agreed to accept the remaining 1,300 illegal immigrants caught in Taiwan. Some 22,000 mainlanders have been repatriated in the past few years (AFP photo)

Al al Bait meeting calls for greater pluralism, zakat fund

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A conclusive call for greater pluralism, political freedoms and social justice as well as the call for the creation of an international zakat fund brought to an end the ninth general conference of the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilisation Research (Al al Bait Foundation) Thursday.

To a final address to the conference participants, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, called for the founding of an international organisation for zakat (alms) and solidarity among Muslims.

"It is intended to become a development, patronage and relief establishment, undertaking the administration of zakat in the Islamic World," the Crown Prince said when opening the three-day conference to participants from 37 countries.

The Crown Prince expressed regret of the status of poor Muslims in the world over. "The economic situation in the Muslim world is defective in terms of distribution of wealth," said the Crown Prince referring to the vast economic inequalities in the Islamic World.

He said that one of the priorities of Muslims and Muslim countries should be to pay attention to both economic and social rights of its citizens and co-religionists.

"These rights guarantee the provision of decent living standards and facilitate the establishment of an integrated and compassionate community," added the Crown Prince.

Such an international organisation for zakat would "remain distant from ties with political regimes or any narrow, limited ambitions."

The conference's final communiqué called for greater efforts by Muslim countries, organisations and peoples to create bridges of communication with the West as the rest of the world.

"There is a need to create a niche for the Muslims in the new world order so that we will influence policies and not just remain at the receiving end of them," said Farouk Jarrar, the executive officer of Al al Bait, whose president is Nasseruddin Al Assad.

The conference called for more democracy and greater freedoms in Islamic societies as well as greater efforts to find just and peaceful solutions to "conflict zones involving Muslims peoples everywhere, especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Palestine."

Heated debates about the application of science and technology, lifestyles of Muslims and the future of many technologically backward parts of the Muslim World in the 21st century dominated much of the

discussions during three days of talks and deliberations.

The need for greater application of science and technology and a reassertion of the social and economic order of Islam were the main themes in papers presented by participants from Europe, Africa, Asia, North America, the Middle East and the Caucasus.

Participants called for a reappraisal of tensions between Muslim and non-Muslim communities in Europe, Africa, North America and Asia and how a collective Muslim World could address these conflicts.

The conflict between "culturally distant Westernised Muslims" and "culturally ignorant Muslim Muslims" was a central theme in many of the talks given and papers presented. "This internal conflict is among the most serious because the threat from within is stronger and more dangerous in the long run than the external threat," said Dr. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, professor of Islamic studies at George Washington University.

The "re-discovery" of the riches and knowledge of Muslim culture, history and science merged with a knowledge of modern science will lead the Muslim World ahead and out of the abyss in which it finds itself today, Farouk Jarrar said.

Hamas, PLO resume reconciliation talks

By Jamal Halaby
The Associated Press

AMMAN — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and its main rival, the Muslim fundamentalist Hamas, have resumed talks to end a feud that has split the Palestinians for more than five years, officials from both sides said Friday.

Ibrahim Ghosheh, the Jordan-based spokesman for Hamas, said a 90-minute meeting was held in Amman Thursday at the request of the PLO.

Two PLO officials, speaking separately on condition of anonymity, confirmed the meeting, but would give no details.

The Hamas delegation, said Mr. Ghosheh, was headed by Imad Alami, the group's representative in Jordan. The other team was led by Abbas Zaki, a member of the Central Committee of Fateh, the PLO's mainstream faction.

Mr. Zaki and another Fateh Central committee member, Hani Hassan were in Damascus earlier in the meeting for quiet talks with the leaders of other PLO factions, namely George Habash of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Nayer Havatmeh of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Like Hamas, the two groups have been demanding the withdrawal of the Palestinians from the Middle East peace process to protest the lack of progress in the effort, begun in October 1991.

Increasing pressure to end Palestinian participation in the peace process, coupled with accusations of financial and political mismanagement from within his own Fateh faction, have seriously weakened PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's position.

Rapprochement with the key rival groups, could help Mr. Arafat regain some of his lost popularity.

Thursday's was the first meeting between Hamas and the PLO since April, when a reconciliation effort broke down over the Palestinian participation in the round of Middle East peace talks in Washington.

Lamas, the Arabic acronym for Islamic Resistance Movement, had demanded that the Palestinians boycott the peace

process until Israel agrees to repatriate some 400 men it expelled from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip Dec. 17.

The exiles, most of whom belong to Hamas or another hardline Palestinian faction, Islamic Jihad, remain stuck between Israeli and Lebanese army lines in South Lebanon.

"We attended the meeting called for by the PLO because we felt that it was in the interest of the Palestinian cause," Mr. Ghosheh said of Thursday's meeting.

"We discussed the peace process, national unity, the blessed Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories as well as ways of escalating the struggle against the (Israeli) enemy," he told the Associated Press.

"But the meeting focused mainly on the possible convening of a wide gathering of Palestinian groups from inside and outside the occupied territories. The intention is to launch a national dialogue that would review the peace process and Palestinian participation in it," Mr. Ghosheh said.

Hamas, which means zeal, is opposed to the peace talks. It advocates the destruction of Israel and the establishment of an Islamic state in pre-1948 Palestine.

The Hamas-PLO reconciliation effort began in Khartoum in December. But the two factions, which have been vying for support in the occupied territories since the start of the Palestinian uprising in 1987, remain wide apart.

The PLO has been losing influence, especially in the Gaza Strip, to Hamas. There have been some shooting incidents in the occupied territories between supporters of the two groups.

Palestinians attribute the increase of support for Hamas to a generous flow of cash from Tehran at a time the PLO is struggling to survive.

The PLO has been ostracised by its main bankrollers in the Gulf because of Mr. Arafat's pro-Iraq policy during the 1991 war for the liberation of Kuwait.

This has deprived Mr. Arafat from millions of dollars in financial aid, and forced him to slash the PLO's annual budget of \$300 million by more than a third.

U.S. sees progress in talks with N. Korea

GENEVA (AFP) — The United States signalled Friday significant progress in persuading North Korea to accept inspection of its nuclear sites, saying it expected a "substantive" announcement Monday.

Senior delegations from the two countries met here for the second time this week and agreed to hold a third session at the U.S. mission on Monday, said a U.S. statement to the press.

"We expect that we will have something substantive to share with you after Monday's meeting," said the statement by Robert Gallucci, assistant secretary state for political-military affairs and chief U.S. negotiator here.

U.S. officials would not elaborate on what progress may have been made in efforts to resolve the dispute sparked by fears that Pyongyang was intent on developing nuclear weapons.

The discussions resumed Friday at the Geneva mission of the hard-line communist state after a report from Seoul suggested the two countries had made a breakthrough in ending the impasse.

The Yonhap news agency quoted a Seoul official as saying that Washington would offer to suspend next year's joint military exercises with South Korea as part of a deal.

The Americans reportedly would also reaffirm all U.S. tactical nuclear weapons had been withdrawn from South Korea and Pyongyang would then agree to discuss inspection of its site.

U.S. and Pyongyang negotiators had seven hours of discussions at the U.S. mission Wednesday, which the North Koreans called "very intense" and both sides described as useful.

But a U.S. spokesman said that "we need to make a lot of progress" and suggested there was little chance of the current round of negotiations going beyond Friday.

Asked what would happen if the talks fail to produce an agreement with the hard-line communist state, the spokesman had said, "We go back to the Security Council to report."

Officials have spoken of imposing possible U.N. economic sanctions on Pyongyang, which has threatened to pull out of the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Jordan gets extension of debt talks

(Continued from page 1)

Jordan owed Russia JD 35.9 million (\$52.4 million), China JD 5.8 million (\$8.4 million) and Brazil JD 25.9 million (\$37.8 million). The Central Bank figures did not include a country-by-country detail of the remainder of the long-term debts owed to governments of government agencies.

The Kingdom's debts to commercial banks stood at JD 770.6 million (\$1,125 million). The amount that Jordan hopes to reschedule under the agreement with the London Club is \$995 million, and the rest has been bought back by Amman at a discounted price.

Further split-ups were not immediately available.

Christopher to visit Mideast in August

(Continued from page 1)

On his week-long mission, Mr. Ross held talks with Palestinian, Israeli, Jordanian and Syrian leaders in a bid to breathe new life into the peace process after 10 rounds of talks.

Mr. Sharaa said the Ross team informed that Mr. Christopher planned to visit the Middle East within the next two weeks.

Mr. Rabin, through Mr. Ross, warned Syria, the main foreign power in Lebanon, to cut supply lines from Iran to guerrillas in Lebanon.

"The Lebanese resistance functions at Lebanese will. Every people subjected to occupation devises the necessary ways to resist that occupation," Mr. Sharaa told reporters after meeting President Elias Hrawi.

Mr. Ross excluded Lebanon from his Middle East tour last week in which he tried to push forward the 20-month-old peace process.

Ekeus meets Aziz and Sahaf

(Continued from page 1)

for food and medicine and to cover the cost of the weapons monitoring programme. Some will go into a fund for reparations to war victims.

Iraq would receive about \$800 million in the sale.

"It will be stupid to think that the Iraqi leadership will compromise on the rights of its people," the Al Thawra daily newspaper said in a front-page editorial.

"We say frankly that the threats of the United States and

Multilateral agencies accounted for JD 885.3 million (\$1,292.4 million). These included the IMF (JD 74.2 million — \$108.3 million), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Development Agency (combined total JD 503.1 million — \$734.3 million), the Arab Monetary Fund (JD 80.9 million — \$118.1 million) and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (JD 140.9 million — \$205.6 million).

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COLUMN

Mulroneys give furniture to nation

OTTAWA (AFP) — Former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and his wife Mila have agreed to donate to the country some of the furniture they had bought and installed in the prime minister's residences, a government agency said Thursday. There had been a major political row over a decision by the National Capital Commission, a government agency whose members were appointed by the Mulroney government, to pay the former leader and his wife more than 150,000 dollars (\$117,000) for furniture, china and decorations they left behind when Mr. Mulroney left office last month. Opposition members of parliament complained that the purchase of the secondhand goods was in effect a tax-free gift to the Mulroneys and was unprecedented in Canadian history. They also complained that the National Capital Commission had refused to name the two firms of assessors it said it had consulted about the fair price for the Mulroneys' cast-offs and that the purchase price should have been based on the secondhand value of the goods rather than the replacement value that the commission said it had agreed to. On Thursday, the commission issued a brief statement saying "the purchase of furniture and furnishings" belonging to the Mulroneys had been "terminated" at the request of Mr. Mulroney.

Vietnamese scientist wins Magsaysay award

MANILA (AP) — Agricultural scientist Vo Tong Xuan of Vietnam was named Friday as winner of this year's Ramon Magsaysay Award for Government Service. The awards board said Mr. Xuan, who is also vice rector of the University of Can Tho, was recognised for "combining practical scientific research and effective advocacy to improve the lives of Vietnamese farmers." It praised him for coming home to help rebuild his war-ravaged country. "Xuan elected to forsake safer and more lucrative possibilities elsewhere and returned home to resume his post in Can Tho (and) to extend his activities beyond the university and into the fields," the board said. "A soil scientist, he explained, needs to be with farmers." Mr. Xuan has been responsible in building grassroots agricultural programmes in Vietnam. He also was among the founders of the region-wide Asian Farming Systems Association. Mr. Xuan finished his bachelor's and master's degrees in agricultural chemistry at the University of Philippines and his doctorate degree at Kyushu University in Japan. The Magsaysay Awards were established in 1959 to honour a popular Philippine president who died in a plane crash the year before. The award, among the most prestigious in Asia, carries a cash prize of \$30,000, a certificate and a gold medal.

Anglican vicar plans to quit if wife is ordained

LONDON (RT) — A vicar said he will quit the Church of England and become a Roman Catholic if the church goes ahead with plans to ordain women — including his wife. "I have to listen to my conscience and that tells me I can't remain with the Church of England if women's ordination is approved," said Mari Milward, 31, from Sunderland in northeast England, told the Times newspaper. But he said the rift in his household was purely theological and had probably brought him closer to his wife Caroline, also 31, who wants to become an Anglican minister. "It is possible to love someone and continue living with them while respecting their different views," Milward said. The church decided last year to let women join the ranks of its ministers despite fierce opposition.

Welfare recipient dances, loses benefits

OSLO (AP) — Nelly Elgaen heard that dancing might help her bad back, which has kept her off work and on sick leave for almost a year. So the 44-year-old Norwegian went to the village dance with her husband and took a few turns on the dance floor in March, newspapers reported. Her case worker spotted her and cut her welfare benefits in half. "We believe her presence at the dance is not consistent with her diagnosis," Arnold Eggen, head of the welfare office in the southern town of Engerdal, told the Oslo newspaper Dagbladet.